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Little Gods



ROWLAND THOMAS



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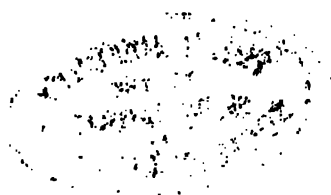
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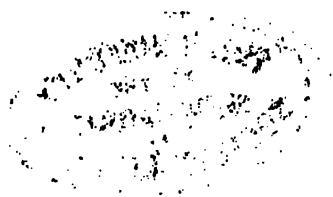
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*"The Deputy Supervisor revealed to them the thrilling difference
between a peach and an apple."*

[FRONTISPICE. See p. 297



The Little Gods

A Masque of the Far East

BY

ROWLAND THOMAS

Illustrated by Charles Sarka

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1909

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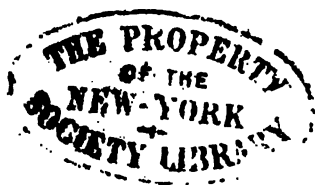
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To
MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER

The author acknowledges the courtesy of the publishers of *Collier's* and *Everybody's Magazine* in granting him permission to reprint the stories which appeared in those magazines.

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THE LITTLE GODS

PROLOGUE

THE LITTLE GODS

For the life of me, as I was sitting here this sunny, late-October morning, I could not write, a distressing condition, truly, for one who lives by writing.

Outside the windows of this quiet country house lay the lean fields of New England, soberly beautiful enough in their fading autumnal colorings, but somehow yielding no inspiration — forgive the pretentious and convenient word — no inspiration for my pen.

All around me my neighbors were busy; soberly engaged, each man of them, in safeguarding himself, his body, soul, and his possessions, against the accidents of life and death. They too, somehow, failed to inspire that sluggish bit of pointed gold. Neither do

your sober neighbors, friend, as I think of them. In all essentials they might be my own. For we are all a care-worn people, we of this young West, moving always circumspectly, hedging ourselves round with a tenfold wall against surprises, with creeds and codes and philosophies innumerable, all warranted Hell-proof and Heaven-kissing.

We count him wisest who lives and loves and dies most by rule. And the rule is that rule of our Tory Grecian forbears, "Never too much." "We may be a wise people and a happy people," said I to myself, "but we are quite too prudent to be counted young, in anything but years." And so that bit of gold hung uninspired as when it left the shop. It waited for livelier, more zestful topics than the daily grind of sober middle age.

Then all at once, it seemed, familiar voices called to me from that East we deem so old, and I was back there. A street stretched beneath me, such a street as only the Far East knows, and there only in one enchanted city. It was a wide street, and a long one, all aquiver with hot, stinging sunlight. It was walled with solid, four-square houses, and above them roofs and pinnacles rose in a hun-

dred fantastic, airy shapes for which our Western architecture has no names, and the fronts of the houses flashed with decorations of barbaric red and gold. The street flamed with them. And all down the spacious, sun-flooded length of it, filling it from brim to brim, like a river, poured a current of tumultuous life.

From out the crowd eyes met mine, just as they used to do. Eyes of men intent on conquest, of goods, perhaps, or power, or pleasure, the eyes of men who sought, not soberly. Mocking, inviting, smiling, fathomless, straightforward eyes of women, who, forgetting, or unknowing Heaven and Hell, still knew that they were women, mistresses of a woman's joys and sorrows. Eyes of losers at the game, unhopeful but uncowed. Thousands of eyes glanced up at me, and not one solitary pair of them were like the eyes that look out soberly from your neighbor's head, or mine.

As my eyes questioned theirs, it seemed to me again, just as it used to do, that there in the old East, where life began, it still throbs most strongly, tingles most with the hot blood of youth; that there men, eternally young, are still most unafraid, grasp with least hesitation

all life offers them, and accept the outcome of their choice with most sincerity.

As I was thinking that, it seemed to me that I went down into the life and stinging sunshine of the street, and mingled with it, till at last my steps led me down an alley and across a drawbridge that spanned a green and pestilential moat, and I approached the low gateway of a gray Walled City which was old when History was young. I passed under the cavern of the gate — and my feet rang on the worn flagstones as I passed — and came into a narrow street between low, sombre houses without windows, and so presently to a temple which in that city bears an unpleasant reputation. Not that scandal hangs about it — it takes Christian tongues to make libertines and guzzlers of Christian priests. But it is said that for some few centuries experiments in — in Psychical Research, let us say — have been going on in that old temple of Tzin Piaôu, with results that are not always reassuring to a lay beholder. I was in too careless a mood to care for that, that morning, and the porter let me pass, barbarian that I was, and I crossed the great courtyard and came to a little cell built in the thickness of the walls.

Inside the cell I saw an old, old man, a priest, though but a heathen one, half reclining on a hollowed slab of stone.

He was a very gaunt old man, but a very tall and strong one, and his face was like a mask of yellow parchment, seamed with a multitude of tiny wrinkles, and his eyes were two slits set slantwise in it. But as he heard my step and looked up, they widened, and the spark of a smile glimmered in them.

"It is you again, my son?" said that old heathen priest to me in greeting, though I did not remember having seen him before that day. "What is it now?"

Suddenly I knew why I had come. "My father," I said, though he was but a heathen, "I want to see Life through your eyes."

He looked into me, and through me, and beyond me into vacancy, and as he looked the spark of laughter in his eyes danced, and flickered up into a tiny fire. "You are older now," said he. "Sit down. I will tell you first of the Game of the Little Gods, and then you shall see Life through my eyes."

"The Little Gods?" I asked, squatting on the floor. It was the only seat he had to offer me.

"The Great God," my heathen priest explained, unheeding me and smiling into vacancy, "the Great God created us men in his own image — and soon found us, as objects of His constant contemplation, distinctly wearisome. If He could have laughed, it would not have mattered much, but Amusement is beneath the ken of a Great God. Therefore our inconsistencies, our pettinesses, our hopeless contradictions, quickly wearied Him, as they would us if we had to take them seriously, forever. And so," drawled my heathen tutor, "the Great God, at last, in self-defense, created some Little Gods to take charge of the everyday affairs of men. So far as they are Gods, of course, these Little Gods are Eternal and Impartial, far raised above Love and Aversion, Pity and Scorn, Admiration and Derision, and all our other small emotions. To them all things are equal. But so far as they are Little, and not Great, they are capable of Amusement. And so," said he, "those lucky Little Gods while away Eternity by playing games, wherein we men are counters. But we men too," he added, smiling through me into vacancy, "if we are wise, can gain amusement by looking on at the games we're part of."

"I," said I, "have never noticed anything which looked like games —"

"No?" he said, half mockingly. "You never watched a strong man strive his utmost and grasp at last what he strove for, a handful of ashes and dry leaves? Never saw a woman love with all her heart, till she broke it, loving? Never saw Tragedy or Comedy or Farce wherein the players were not actors? Have all Life's contradictions —"

"But they've always taught me," I objected, "that in those seeming contradictions, an inscrutable Wisdom was working for the ultimate good of those —"

"My son," said my old heathen priest, stretching his old legs out on his stony slab, "go and see for yourself. This is the hour when I take one of my naps. See for yourself."

CHAPTER I

FAGAN

I FOUND myself "up the railroad," as we used to say, in a well-remembered town. It had not changed since I saw it last. The railroad still ran through it, straight as a pencil-stroke ruled across the flat lands, and the rails, on their embankment, shimmered in the sun like two unending bars of white-hot metal. The cart road still wallowed into it, and out of it, for the town is set on an island in the marshy level of the paddies. The crazy huts of nipa, and crazier, decaying houses, still stood thick on either side of the one street.

And brown women in skirts of gaudy calico still sat under the shadow of wide shutters, dispensing such goods as Poverty can buy, while their babies and their pigs rolled comfortably together in the dust. The shaggy thatch still rustled in the sultry breeze, and a few dejected palm-trees clicked their branches as of old. And, very far away across the waveless green

sea of the half-grown rice, the same dark and threatening mountains towered into the clouds. It was all unchanged. The merciless sun struck down just as hotly. The very smells were smells I had often smelled before.

Suddenly there was a stir of excitement in the town. The women crawled from the litter of their wares. The men, lighting fresh cigarettes from the remnants of their old ones, stood up to gaze. For down the street was coming, with the curious in-toeing shuffle of a barefoot mountaineer, a squat, huge-muscled, naked man.

He carried a long, broad-bladed spear in his right hand, and a head-axe was thrust through his belt, and at his back a bag, swollen as if it held something big and round, bobbed and dangled heavily, and something dripped from it slowly, thickly, in the dust. The man's broad, sweat-streaked face was all agrin with excitement and good-nature, but the natives of the town shrank back from him as he passed. "Donde 'Mericanos?" he kept asking eagerly.

A bystander pointed to a house, one a little taller than the others, where a flag of dingy white, barred with dingier red and blue, hung drooping, and a group of tall, lean, sun-

bronzed men dressed in frayed shirts of blue flannel, and breeches of stained and faded khaki, and battered campaign hats, were lounging in the dusty shade. The bystander pointed to them, and the naked man, his face stretching in a wider grin, broke into a clumsy trot and ran to them.

"Me got," he said, and pulled the heavy, bobbing bag from his shoulders, and thrust it at them. They fell back hastily. "It's *something*, all right," said one of them judicially. "Something plenty dead. Sergeant," he called, "I reckon it's your deal. Here's an Igaroot with another dead-head lookin' for you." And the others laughed.

At that an oldish man with a long, drooping, gray moustache, and gray eyes that were bright below their sun-burned lids, stepped from the door. The naked man cried out again, "Me got," and held out his dripping bag. And the saturnine old sergeant fell back, as the men had done.

"You open it, Johnnie," he commanded. "It's too dead for me. *Patay, sabe?* Me no likum thataway. *Icao abierta.*"

So the man undid the string that bound his bag, and opened it, and the sergeant took one

peep inside. "It's a big American nigger, all right," he announced. "And he's sure dead. It might be him. Better call the Captain over here, some one; I don't reckon he wants *that* in his quarters. Where you catch him, hombre?"

The little man jerked his chin over his shoulder at those distant mountains. "You buy?" he asked anxiously.

"You'll get the reward all right, if it's him," said the sergeant reassuringly. "But you'll have to wait till it's identified. There've been a lot of duplicates brought in, *sabe*."

Presently other men in khaki and flannel, who in spite of their undress showed, somehow, as officers, came down the street, and they, and the sergeant, and the man with the bag, went into the house.

After a long wait, an orderly came out, pale and shaken, and turned toward the military telegraph station. "It's him," he said briefly, to his waiting fellows. "That Contract Dentist in there knowed him by his teeth. God! I'm plumb glad I ain't no kind of medico."

The men looked at each other, silently, for a long minute. The spirit of jesting seemed to have left them. The judicial one spoke first.

"Well, he got *his* good and hard at last," said he. "But he sure got a run for his money."

Then I understood what it was all about. I wrote of that thing in the bag once, not knowing it then for a pawn in the Game of the Little Gods. There was a time when men called it Fagan.

While Fagan was still a kinky-haired youngster, clad only in the traditional shirt, a question forced itself on his attention. "Why ain't I got a pappy?" he asked his mother, and the great, deep-bosomed woman laughed the deep, melodious laugh of her race.

"Lawszee, honey, I raickon you has," she replied. "Mos' chillen has."

"Who is my pappy?" the child persisted.

The woman laughed again. "Lawszee, chile, how you spaik me to 'maimber that? I'se got other things to 'maimber, I raickon."

We couldn't expect much of a Fagan, born of that race and class, and he learned not to expect much of us. A bit of food, a bit of clothing, and a chance to roll around on the levee with the other pickaninnies, and bask in the sunshine and sniff the sweet-sour smells from the sugar-ships, sufficed him. For many years these pleasures were his for the taking.

And as he grew older they still sufficed, with the addition of a little cheap tobacco and cheaper gin, and he found that a modicum of labor and a care never to offend one of the heaven-born white race would procure them. The labor was easy, for the son of the deep-bosomed, supple-limbed woman had grown, as the rank, free growth of a swamp shoots up, into a great, broad, graceful man to whom the toil of others was mere play. And he was of a nature so easy-going and joyous and childishly obliging that the heaven-born pointed him out with approval as "a nigger like we had before the war."

He might have lived on thus indefinitely, but one day, over a lazy roll of the dice, another black man took advantage of his known good nature. And Fagan, the kindly, felt a sudden, blinding impulse to strike. The huge black fist shot out like lightning under the impulse of the supple, writhing muscles, and the other man dropped with a broken neck.

Then Fagan came to the Army, and the Army received him with joy. The surgeon's eye glistened with an artist's fervor as he thumped and kneaded the great, perfect animal, and a wise old recruiting sergeant guided the

pen for him to sign his name. Thus he was made welcome in that most catholic of societies, which cares not a whit for your past, your present, or your future, so long as you have mind and body sufficient to obey orders.

But even this slight requirement was much for Fagan. His careless, soapless, buttonless existence was a poor training for the rigid minutiae of military life. And he was unfortunate in his immediate commander. Most of the officers of the Fifty-fourth were of the South, able to deal firmly yet kindly with the big black children committed to their charge. But Sharpe was new to the Army, the son of a small tradesman in the North, and had an exalted reverence for the Regulations, and his own rank. So when he saw that the buttons of Fagan's blouse were uncleared, one morning at guard-mounting, he did not announce the fact impersonally, as an officer should.

And Fagan, in serene ignorance of any law against immediate explanation, replied with boyish, surprised chuckle, "Lawszee, Lootenant, I raickon I plumb forgot them buttons."

"That's enough," snapped the officer. "Sergeant, put this man under arrest."

Fagan followed to the guard-house, mildly

expostulant. "He suah'd orter give me a fairah show," he said to the sergeant. "I was jus' a gwine to tell him. I didn't mean no hahm. All I wanted was a fayah show."

Thus began a series of petty persecutions. Fagan, with his good nature, tried his best, but the Lieutenant would not be pleased. He was not a bad sort in intent, simply a common, weak, official bully. Such men usually resign early, or if they linger on in the service, learn to shun getting in front of their men when there is firing.

By the time the regiment was ordered to the Philippines Fagan's record loomed black with five trials. But the campaigning brought relief. A man was required only to have his rifle in good condition, and be on hand to use it. The regiment spent weary days, dragging about like a slow snake under the burning sun, soaking and shivering in the mists of evening, till men began to sicken. But not Fagan. His melodious bellow would ring triumphant along the lines each night, "I'se been wo'okin' on the ra'alroad," and cheer the drooping men, till the voices of the company wits were demanding, "Who's dat ar white man got a ra'alroad?"



"All I wanted was a fayah show."

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And then, one day, the scouts reported that the main body of the enemy was near, that elusive body for which the regiment had been groping so long. After a little the snake broke out into a fan, and went crawling across a muddy rice-paddy toward a cane-brake. Then a flight of strangely drawling insects sang overhead, and as always, when firing is wild and high, some men in the reserve, 'way in the rear, lay down very suddenly.

The merry bugles rattled, and the fan dissolved into a thin brown line of men who advanced swiftly to the edge of the brake, firing as they went. And then, all at once, the brake was alive with dizzily flashing steel. A little brown man rose in front of Fagan, and a flash darted straight at his head. Instinctively his muscles reacted, and he ducked backward like a boxer. So the bolo missed his head, but the sharp point, tearing downward, ripped through shirt and flesh on his breast.

Fagan stared stupidly at the dripping red edges of the blue cloth till the sharp tingle of the flesh stirred him. As before, he felt a blinding impulse to strike, and whirled his heavy rifle in one hand, as a boy might a stick. He looked down at the quivering, moaning

thing before him, and a mad joy of strength surged over him. A little way apart a struggling group was weaving in and out with darts of steel and quick flashes of rifles, and hoarse gruntings and cursings. He ran toward it, swinging his broken rifle round his head. "Give 'em heyell, boys," he shouted. "Kill the damn niggers."

From that day he was called Wild Fagan, and Fagan the Nigger-Killer, and as the campaign progressed, his renown passed beyond his regiment. "Heard about that wild nigger in the Fifty-fourth?" asked the Cavalry, borrowing a pinch of Durham and a pit of paper from the Mountain Battery. "Don't sabe fire his rifle. Just butts in and swats 'em with it, like he was wantin' to play golff." The story grew till the Marines, returning from shore service, told the Fleet, half-seriously, of a wild regiment come straight from Africa, "what only knew how to fight with war-clubs." And jacky, ever ready to believe, swore softly in admiration, and spat over the rail, and dreamed of having a little go with that regiment, some night in Nagasaki, when every one had had about seven drinks all round.

Even the officers began to boast. "Oh, you mean our man Fagan," the Colonel would say to guests at mess. "Yes, he's a good man. Expensive—a rifle lasts him about a day when things are lively—but efficient. Yes, highly efficient. The natives are beginning to dodge the regiment. Yes, I'll let you see him after dinner. Finest build of a man you ever laid eyes on. Like a cat, you know, like a cat and a grizzly rolled into one."

And Fagan through it all was unchanged, good-natured, childlike as ever. He was even a bit ashamed of his strength. "That little scrap down by the bridge?" he would say to a group of admirers. "Oh, that all wa'n't nothin'. That big Fillypeeno? Oh, yes, I hit him. Yes, I raickon I smashed him some," he would muse with his slow smile. "I broke my gun on him. Anybody got any tobacco? I nevah can keep no tobacco."

It was after the fighting was done and the regiment went into stations of companies in the villages that the change began to come. The men, keyed to exertion and excitement, found the idleness of barrack life first pleasant, then irksome. And they were at home in these sunny islands, far more at home than ever in

the States. They read the freedom of the land in the burning sky, and the clicking palms, and the lazy air. More than anywhere else, they read it in the dark, admiring eyes of the brown, slim, soft-moving girls. The men began to be absent at check roll-call at Taps.

Then all the wisdom and tact of an officer was needed. Too great easiness meant loss of control, harshness meant desertions. For a time Lieutenant Sharpe did very well. He overlooked what he could, and was unangered in his firmness when he must be firm. But nature and fixed habit overcame him, and Fagan was naturally the chief sufferer, for the officer had grown into the belief that Fagan was the probable cause of every misdemeanor in the company. So it was a reprimand, and then another sharper, and then the summary court — where the Lieutenant was prosecutor and jury and judge — sentenced Fagan to the loss of a month's pay for attempting to run the guard at some unearthly hour of the night. Within a week he repeated the offence, and Lieutenant Sharpe, with the fear of God and the Regulations in his heart, and wondrous small understanding in his head, sentenced him to a "month and a month." A month of

confinement will give any man much time for reflection, and the Lieutenant hoped it might prove salutary.

Fagan received his sentence with ominous lack of his former protestations, and went quietly to the guard-house. But being neither an accomplished thinker nor an expert in moral theory, he did not reflect. He merely sat there and brooded. "All I'm lookin' for is jus' a fayah show," he told himself, over and over again. "He use me right, an' I'll use him right. Ain't I the bes' fightin' man in the regiment, ain't the Kuhnle done said so, a whole plenty o' times? When they's fightin', I'll be there. But that little Lootenant — Lawssee, couldn' I smash *him* — all I want is jus' a straight deal."

Fagan emerged at the end of his month still a child, but a sullen child now, moping over a bitter sense of injustice. "I ain' nevah gwine to stay in theah nothah night," he told his friend the Sergeant. "All I want is a fayah deal, an' I'll use ev'rybody straight. But no one ain't gwine to keep me in theah again." The Sergeant, wise as most old soldiers, made no answer. If the Lieutenant and Wild Fa-

gan were to fight it out, it was no affair of the Sergeant's.

But Fagan, over the drinks, repeated his ultimatum to other men, who waited joyously for the clash, and were surprised and disappointed when Fagan went quietly to the guard-house once again, placed there to await the sitting of a general court martial. The quietness was only because he was learning to plan. When the silence of midnight came, he stole over to an inner window, braced a shoulder and a knee, and the rusted bars yielded noiselessly. He crept up-stairs to his squad-room and took the rifle and the belt, heavy with two hundred rounds of ammunition, from the head of his bunk, and crept as silently down. He tried to steal by the guard at the gate, but the man turned and leveled his rifle, hardly six feet away.

"Halt! Who goes theah?" he challenged, with the mechanical lilt of the sentry.

"You min' you' business, Sam, an' I'll ten' to mine," Fagan growled.

But the man persisted, though with a tremor in his voice. "Yo' halt, Fagan. Ah've got to fin' —"

Fagan gripped his rifle by the muzzle, and

stepped swiftly toward the leveled one. "You git out o' heah, Sam," he ordered. "Git, or I'll smash you."

The sentry dropped his rifle. "Ah ain' nevah troubled you all, Fagan," he whined. "Ah'm a frien' o' you all's. You lait me alone." He sank to his knees. "You lait me alone. Don' you touch me, don' you touch — " His voice rose to a shriek, but he was talking to empty air. Fagan had picked up the extra rifle and slipped away toward the town.

"Ah couldn' he'ep it, sah. He done come up out o' the dahk, with his eyes a buhnin', an' he sa-ays, 'Ah'll maash you, Sam.' Ah couldn' he'ep mase'ef. Ah've seen him maash these yere Fillypeenos." Thus the sentry to the Lieutenant next morning, with heartfelt earnestness. "Ah wouldn' cared if he was gwine to shoot, but he comes a grinnin', an' he sa-ays, 'Ah'll maash you, Sam.' That's what he sa-ays, an' he'd a done it," he explained later, to a group of sympathizing men. "Ah don' min' gettin' shot, but Ah suah don' wantah git maashed. So Ah dropped ma rifle. Ah've seen him maash these yere Fillypeenos. He ain' no man, he's a plumb bawn devil, tha's what he is," and Sam wiped the sweat drops

from his throat with the back of his big, shaking hand.

Then ensued many tentative pushings at the bars, to prove that no two mere men could spring them back into position, and many side-long glances at Fagan's ownerless cot and the chest which stood beside it, closed and mysterious. When the men turned in, no one objected that Sam placed a lighted candle on it. "They don' come roun' wheah it's light," he explained vaguely to the room, and every one knew what "they" meant. Even the old Sergeant, coming through at roll-call, apparently did not see the forbidden light.

And now the United States Army lapsed into a state of hysteria which often amused and puzzled those who witnessed it. It became haunted by a big black man who mashed people instead of shooting them decently. There happened to be a recrudescence of fighting, and the Army imputed it to Fagan. That stupid, brooding, grown-up child became a tactician, a strategist, a second De Wet of guerilla warfare.

"I have the honor to report," wrote young Shavetail to the A. G. O. — through proper channels — "a sharp engagement wherein the

enemy hindered the development of my flanking movement by — unusual brilliancy for native leaders — honor to suggest — deserter Fagan rumored to be in vicinity.”

“Scouts report,” wired Major Oakleaf, “two hours’ ride southeast of camp, huge negro. Request description renegade Fagan.”

“We’re out gunnin’ fer that big buck nigger answers to the name of Fagan,” remarked Mountain Battery to Cavalry, borrowing back the “makings” and a match to boot. “He’s seen up back here in the foot-hills last night.”

“Wire through this mornin’,” jeered Signal Corps, overhearing, “reportin’ him up Cagayan way. An’ yesterday he was down in Batangas. He sure must hike light.”

“Well, he’s a lively nigger, from all I hear,” said Cavalry judicially. “Some one’ll likely get hurt ’fore they get him.”

“He’ll maybe get hurt a little bit himself, just a shade, if this old girl falls on him,” laughed Mountain Battery, patting the nose of the vicious little gun in the packsaddle. “Ho’ still, you old mule-horse, you! Think I’ll stand for you kickin’ *me*?”

So the little armies marched and sweated,

and the wires carried bulletins to every little post: "Inform troops and natives — renegade Fagan, deserter Fifty-fourth — very big black negro, age twenty-one, large bolo scar on breast — five hundred dollars, gold, alive or dead."

And all the while Fagan was living quietly with the girl who had been the chief cause of all his insubordination, in a little mountain village not fifty miles from the place where his ghost first rose and called for lighted candles.

The reports of his evil fame brought him no joy. "Why can't they let us alone," he complained to Patricia. "I never hurt them, and if they don't trouble us we won't trouble them. Eh, Patsí?" and he swept the slender girl up to his shoulder.

"Pooh," cried Patricia disdainfully, from her height. "What do we care for them! You will kill them all, won't you?" She pinched the great supporting arm with a sigh of satisfaction. "Hola, there's Enrique's cock fighting with Juan's. Let's go and watch them." And as they walked down the narrow grassy street, the people stepped aside with cheerful smiles, for all the world like the dusty

pickaninnies on the levee when one of the heaven-born passes by.

For a long time Fagan and Patricia lived on in the village, till the man was becoming a myth. A dozen enterprising hunters had brought in his head, and the papers in Manila had ceased to give circumstantial accounts of his capture even when news was short. But at last an American prisoner came to the town, the only white man who saw Fagan alive after his desertion. By a strange chance he was an officer of the Fifty-fourth, and Fagan received him with sober joy.

"I'se right glad to see you, Lootenant," he said. "I raickoned they'd bring you up heah, when I hea'd you was done capchuhed. They kind brings mos' ev'ything up to me, these days."

The white man was not joyous, though undismayed. "What are you going to do with me, now you've got me?" he demanded.

"Don' you worry, Lootenant," Fagan answered. "I wouldn' huht you. No, sir, you nevah troubled me. You jus' set down an' have a smoke. I'se a gwine to send you down, jus' as soon as I can."

They sat and smoked in silence, the giant

negro, the prisoner in his draggled uniform, the little brown guards with their naked bolos. At last Fagan said, "I raickon we could talk bettah if these yere guards was away. You git," he pointed to them. "Course you give you' wohd, Lootenant, you won't try to 'scape."

The officer nodded, and fell to watching the great, quiet, unshapen black face. It roused his curiosity for a certain non-offensive air of self-reliance which he had never seen in a black face before. "Fagan," he asked suddenly, "why did you do it?"

"Do what, Lootenant?"

"Desert, and lead the natives against us, and all that."

The negro clenched his great fist. "This yere fool talk makes me plumb riled," he said. "I ain' nevah fought the 'Mericans. I'se a 'Merican myse'f, ain't I? An' what would I want to go yampin' roun' the country for, anyway? I'se got all I want right heah, chickens, an' yams, an' a good dry house, an' —" He reached out his hand and grasped Patricia's little one, and they smiled at each other. "No, sir, I don' want no moah fightin'. I'se got a good home, an' I goes to sleep when I wants

to, an' I gits up when I wants to, an' I has clean clo'es ev'y day. You tell the Kuhnel, Lootenant, you tell him Fagan nevah went to huht no 'Mericans, an' nevah will, less'n they goes to huht me first. You believe that, don' you, Lootenant?" And the officer gravely nodded "Yes."

"Bout that desertin', now. I'se thought a whole lot about that, an' I raickon I done it jus' because I had to have mo' room. I'se some big, I raickon —" he let his eyes travel slowly down his body and chuckled — "seems like I has to have a whole plenty o' room. Seems like they wahn't room fo' me an' Lootenant Sha'ap in one ahmy. No, sir. An' then, I dunno, Lootenant, maybe you nevah felt how a woman can make you 'shamed of youse'f? This Patricia lady, maybe she don' seem like much to you, but she's a heap to me — yes, sir, — an' she kep' sayin', 'What for you go calabozo, Fagan? Kill the little pig of a teniente,' she says. 'Kill ev'rybody. You'se big enough.' An' then she laughs at me. 'Is you 'fraid, big man?' she says. 'Lend me youah revolvah, then. I'se little, but I ain't afraid.' She jus' made me plumb scairt of myse'f, an' we come away, 'cause

Patsí an' me needed more room 'n what Loo-tenant Sha'ap could give us. 'Pears like you couldn' understan' it, but that's the way it was, I raickon. I jus' had to desert or huht somebody bad."

He stopped, and the woman began to speak to him. The white man watched her, and a great light burst upon him. She was glorious, this slim, soft brown thing with the dusky hair and the straight, slender neck, and — "I'se little, but I ain't afraid." Ages of civilization dropped from the man as he gazed, and with a graceless pity he compared the pale fettered women he had known with this free, wild, perfect thing whose feeling was her life. She was talking with her tongue and eyes and hands, and Fagan answered a few words and laughed, and she laughed, too, a sound as natural and sweet as the ripple of a stream, and then her great eyes lighted with earnestness as she went on. The Lieutenant felt a pang of something almost jealousy. He could never bring fire to those eyes, he was not a man to her, only a thing, not to be compared with that black giant.

Fagan turned to him with an amused chuckle. "She's full o' ginger," he said.

"I raickon it's lucky I was heah when you come. She's jus' been askin' when I was goin' to kill you. 'You must,' she says, 'or else he'll lead soldiers up heah.' That's all right, Lootenant," he said, as the officer moved uneasily. "That's you' duty, an' it's all right, only she don' understand that. 'Le's kill him now,' she says. 'You keep a talkin' with him, an' I'll put the knife into him from behin'. It won' be no trouble at all.' Laws-zee," he chuckled admiringly, "I raickon she'd a done it, too. She's got moah ginger!"

The Lieutenant smiled with him, but he soon rose, unobtrusively, and seated himself with his back to the solid corner-post of the house. Patricia watched the manoeuvre with unfathomable eyes, and the men burst into laughter; then she hung her head like a child caught in some mischief. The gesture was adorable, and suddenly sadness stifled the white man's laughter.

"I'm sorry about reporting your presence here," he said. "I understand, I think, and I believe you don't want to make trouble, but —"

"Don' you worry about that," Fagan broke in. "I'se a gwine to send you down to the

ra'alroad this afternoon. An' now Patsi's goin' to get you some dinner."

"Fagan," said the Lieutenant, yet more earnestly, while his guard waited for him to mount, "I'm right sorry about this. But — why don't you come down with me now and surrender?" he asked impulsively. "That will help, and I can explain some things to the court, and you'll only get six months or so, for desertion. Only six months, and then — you can come back to Patricia," he ended almost enviously.

The negro seemed to swell before the white man's astonished eyes. "I'se sorry, too. It's been mighty pleasant, livin' heah," he said simply. "An' thank you fer askin' me to come down. I know you means it straight. But you can't see it like I do. Down theah I'se a niggah soldier. Up heah I'se — Nobody ain't got any right to try me," he burst out. "I nevah troubled *them*. You tell the Kuhnel that, I want he should understan'. I don' want to huht no one, but I'se nevah gwine into no gahd-house again. Good-by, Lootenant, an' luck. I don' raickon we all'll evah meet up again."

So Fagan and Patricia must needs leave the

snug little house at the end of the sleepy, grass-grown street, and go out on the High Trail, the unknown of the people of the plains, a broad highway to things with hoofs and claws and wings, and to men little less wild than they, the men of the hills. At times the brown thread of the Trail was twined amid the giant roots of trees, and they wandered in a cool twilight, alone with the long creepers and the ferns and the bright birds which played about some opening in the matted roof, far above their heads, where the sun dropped through for a brief hour. Sometimes it clung to the massive walls of a cañon, where a river boiled so far below that the sound of its torment came to their ears like the babble of a brook. Sometimes it shot upward to the realm of the clouds, and from the bare, grassy heights they peered out through shifting mist wreaths over all the cities and fields of the plains to the blue hint of the distant sea.

Fagan and Patricia followed the Trail steadily but leisurely, day after day. There was no call for haste, no white pursuer knew that road. So they laughed and played, and lay for hours beside some cool spring, basking in the warm sunshine and the thin, sharp air,

and camped at night in little valleys under a pall of cloud. Once Fagan shot a deer, and they delayed for days, drying the meat over pungent wood-smoke. But as their muscles hardened to the Trail, they insensibly made greater progress, in spite of their dallying.

Two weeks brought them to the land of the Unknown, had they but known it. The mountains were higher and wilder, the cloud-caps more frequent. Often the forest on some huge hill, towering black above the Trail, was thin and pointed at the top, as if it had been torn, and there, unseen of them, was a village perched high on the trunks of trees, whence keen-eyed men watched their progress. But they were children of the plains and could not know, so they walked undismayed. And the keen-eyed men walked with them, unseen, frisking along above them over ground where others would have crept — short, huge-limbed men, whose stiff black hair flowed over their shoulders, and was tied out their eyes with fillets, men who squatted naked in the mists of evening and did not shiver, men who brought their sweethearts hideous dowries of human heads. They hung about the Trail, watching these strange creatures who walked



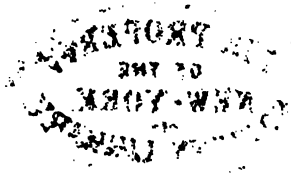
Fagan and Patricia.



openly and undismayed in the land of Fear. Often, when the camp-fire was lighted, they stole up with their muscles twitching like a cat's before she springs, and then halted as a great voice rang over the forest — "I'se been wo'okin' on the ra'alroad" — and they clawed their way up the slopes to the long-legged villages, and took counsel together in the queer fire-shadows.

One evening as they camped, Patricia missed a little bundle of venison and strolled back along the Trail to look for it. Fagan kindled the fire and then strolled back, too. "Hoy, Patsí," he called. The forest was silent. He turned a bend in the Trail, and there — Fagan gazed at it stupidly. Then the blind impulse of wrath swept over him again. But there was naught to strike. The long shadows of the trees lay across the Trail, the creepers swayed lazily in the evening breeze; far up, a crow called petulantly to her belated mate. Fagan swung his arm helplessly at the forest.

"Come out," he moaned, "come out wheah I can see you. Come out, you cowards, you sneakin' dogs that kills women from behind. I'se not afraid of you. Oh, I'll mash you! Come!" With a soft chug, a lance stuck



quivering in the tree beside him. Otherwise all was silent; even the crow had ceased to scold. He looked down. A darker shadow was stealing among the lengthening ones on the Trail. The spirit of the forest gripped Fagan with an icy hand, the spirit of Dread. He ran blindly to the fire, seized his rifle, and took up the Trail alone.

For three days and nights he hurried on. The empty pain of his stomach, the dizzying, numbing lack of sleep, could not hold him against the dread of his unseen escort. It gave little sign, simply the rustling of a fern now and then, the swaying of one creeper when others were still, but he felt its presence and staggered on. On the evening of the third day, he stepped suddenly from the forest into a little theatre among the hills. A clear brook bubbled over golden gravel; the turf beneath a great solitary tree was thick and soft. Wild cocks in the wood were crowing their families to roost.

Everything was quiet and peaceful, and Fagan, as he gazed, became peaceful and quiet, too. He flung himself on the soft turf, and drank his fill from the little brook. As always, when he sought to rest, the forest became

vague with life. A covey of jungle-fowl, flushed by a sudden fright, whirred across the opening. A stone rolled somewhere close at hand, dislodged by a purposely careless foot. But this time Fagan merely grinned, and shook off his clinging cartridge-belt. "You can' bluff me no moah," he said to the forest, a trick he had learned of late. A fern swayed not a dozen yards away, and he clicked a cartridge into his Krag and fired. "You git out," he chuckled. "I'se a gittin' tired of you' company."

When he was rested a little, he kindled a fire and toasted a bit of venison. Then he lay back lazily and twisted his last bit of tobacco into a cigarette. Between puffs he bellowed his evening song, and the rude melody took on the sweetness of a ballad. "Don' you heah the bugle callin'?" Fagan sang, and tossed the butt of the cigarette into the fire. It was quite dark now in the hollow, and he sat in a little circle of dancing light. He looked at the wall of blackness with quiet, unfrightened eyes that presently began to close with the pressure of a mighty drowsiness.

"I'se po'owful sleepy now," he announced at length, "an' I'se a gwine to bed. I was

hopin' to set up an' meet some of you all, but I can't do it. When you all wants me, you all can wake me up." The fire flickered, and he pillowed his head on his arm, and watched the dance of the shadows grow shorter. "Lawszee," he murmured, drowsily, as the great numbness of sleep overcame him, "I raickon Patricia'd think I was scairt again. She'd a sat up an' waited foh them, but I can't. That little girl did have the po'owf'les' lot o' ginger in her." He threw his great arm protectingly over the empty ground beside him. "Good night, Patsi," he murmured.

In that well-remembered town among the paddies, a squat and naked man, huge-muscled, came out of the door of the quarters. In his hand he carried a broad-bladed spear. A head-axe, bright as only speckless steel can be in sunlight, flashed in his girdle. And at his back a bag, plumply round, bobbed heavily, and as it bobbed it gave out a dull jingle, as of coined metal.

"Got his money, all right," said one of the group that watched him.

The savage halted, and grinned widely at each in turn. "Me got," he announced

proudly. "*Mucho dinero. Mucho mucho dinero.* Me got." He could scarcely contain his joy.

One of the watchers growled. "I'm not in favior," said he, "of payin' gu-gus for killin' white men, no matter whether they're white or black. It's a catchin' habit." It was the judicial soldier. He swung his lean bulk toward the grinning little man. "Now you've got it," he commanded, "git!"

The savage, half-comprehending, turned and passed down the path they opened for him, and down the sun-beaten, dusty street, where the silent people fell away before him as if he carried pestilence. And so they saw the last of him, making for those distant, cloud-hung hills of his, moving clumsily but swiftly across the paddies at his shuffling trot, while the price of a man's rebellion bobbed, and jingled dully at his back.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S LITTLE DEVILS

I WAS back in that ancient temple of Tzin Piaôu. My old heathen priest, half reclining on his hollowed slab of stone, was looking at me with a spark of laughter in his keen old eyes.

"Have you seen for yourself?" he asked.

I nodded.

"And how," he asked me, "do you like to look at the Games of the Little Gods?"

"I think," said I angrily, "that they are Little Devils. That black man was a man. If they had given him half a chance —"

"Remember," said my heathen friend, quite calmly, "that I do not know your black man, or what they did to him. Something unpleasant, it appears. It does not matter. It is in the Game. But you think my Little Gods are Little Devils?"

"I do," I said.

"I wonder," mused my heathen priest, smiling through me into vacancy, "what he would think of Little Devils if he saw them." Suddenly his eyes glinted into mine. He made a little imperative gesture with his hand. "Go and see," he said. "This is the hour when I take another nap. And would you mind," he added, "as you're going out, just asking the porter to bring a jug of water?"

That night, when rice was eaten and the circle of darkness had shut down about our fire, Fermín Majusay, the private of Native Scouts who was my escort on the mountain, stretched out on his slim stomach and gazed into the hypnotic flames.

"I am going to tell you about my *teniente*," he said suddenly, "my lieutenant who is dead six months. He was a devil, that man. Listen! You have sat in the *Café Puerta del Sol* and watched the two old Spaniards who play forever the game called chess? Well, when the little man of Don Antonio gets in front of the little horse of Don José, does Don José say, 'Bad little man, go to another little square'? No, he says '*Muerto!*' — '*Dead!*' — and takes the little man away. That is the

he said, 'but I am very glad to see you again. I trust you found the prison at San Pablo pleasant?'

"This Don Augusto knew how to play the game, too. He smiled with his mouth and said: 'It is not bad, Señor Teniente. But it grows tiresome to have the comedy of going there repeated so often. The judge gets tired, too, deciding that I am not such a bad man as my friend the teniente would have him think.'

"My teniente laughed again. 'These judges!' he said. 'If only they could see us as we are, Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes. It is so hard to make them understand.' Then he stopped smiling, and talked very slow, more as if he talked to himself. 'I could send him down to San Pablo again, and I could say to the judge, "Señor Juez, this is the Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes whom the Swiss Bobin accused of giving information to the enemy, so that he lay in San Pablo jail for three weeks, till you said there was no proof." And I could say to the judge: "Last week this innocent gentleman came back from his trial, and last Sunday, as the Swiss Bobin rode on a narrow trail, four men attacked him and cut off his

hand as he drew his revolver, and then killed him." But what would that amount to?'

" 'Very little,' said Don Augusto.

" 'Nothing,' said my *teniente*. 'And I could tell the judge: "That Sunday night men came to the house of the late Swiss Bobin and took his woman away, and her *muchacha* found her next morning staked by the four hands and feet to an ant-hill." But that would be no charge against the Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes.'

" 'Precisely,' said Don Augusto, and he smiled. Oh, he was a big, proud man, and he knew what he could do so well that he did not pretend not to know.

" 'Precisely,' said my *teniente*. 'And I could tell the judge: "The two weeks' baby of the late widow of the late Swiss Bobin died that Monday afternoon, so to-day there is not a soul alive of the family of the man who charged an innocent gentleman unjustly, as you yourself decided, Señor Juez."' "

"Don Augusto smiled and was going to speak, but my *teniente* only moved his hand and went on, and all of us soldiers in the guard-room held our breaths and listened, for we knew that he spoke the truth. 'We could

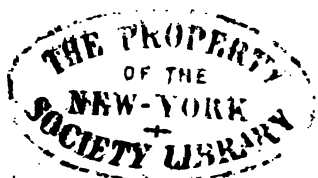
tell the judge: "The four men who killed the man and the woman and left the baby to starve live on the plantation of the prisoner and owe him much money." But what does that prove? Even if we tell him that all the enemies of the Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes for twenty years have gone that way, and that no one any more dares to be a witness against him for fear of his revenge, the judge will not care about that. The judge wants proof, and we have no proof. No matter how well we know each other, we have no proof. So I shall not send my dear friend down to jail again. I am tired of it, too.'

"All we soldiers looked at the ground, for we thought our *teniente* was a fool, like the judge, and would let Don Augusto go again. And Don Augusto looked at us as if we were dogs — I wanted to give him my bayonet — and he smiled and said: 'I thank you so much, *Teniente mio*, for sparing me another of the comedies. It is better for every one. *Adiós*, Señor.'

"Oh, I told you that *teniente* of mine was a devil! He got up and shook the hand of Don Augusto, and *he* smiled and said: '*Adiós*, Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes. We shall



"Adiós, Señor Don Augusto."



not meet again for some time, I think. I am getting very tired of it myself. But I will give you a trustworthy escort. José!'

"We all jumped, his voice was so different, and the corporal of my squad stepped out and saluted. 'You will be the Señor's escort as far as he goes,' my *teniente* said. 'You will need only your revolver.' He stopped a moment, and then he said: 'José, you must be very careful that he does not escape.'

"You know what that order meant then? José knew, and his face went like ashes — he was a baby anyway — and he could hardly say 'Si, mi *teniente*.' And that big fat pig of a Don Augusto, *he* knew, and he dropped all together, as if he had no bones, and he went down on his knees. But my *teniente* only laughed, and said: 'A pleasant journey to you, Señor Don Augusto de los Reyes, and a relief from comedies.'

"And then he took the commissary reports and wrote on them till José came back. José was shaking and green and my *teniente* looked at him. 'You are back quickly,' he said. 'What is the matter?'

"'The prisoner tried to escape, mi *teniente*,' José said.



“ ‘That was very foolish of him,’ said my *teniente*. ‘Where is he now?’

“ ‘Across the river, *mi teniente*,’ José answered.

“ ‘Sergeant,’ said my lieutenant, ‘send two men across the river with shovels,’ and then he tossed José a *peseta* to buy *vino*, and then he went on with the commissary reports.”

Fermin Majusay had forgotten everything else in thinking of his hero, and the fire was almost out. He brought it to a blaze and lay down on his blanket again. “That night while we whispered together in barracks, and that chicken-hearted José sat by himself and muttered prayers and drank *vino* out of his bottle, we named our *teniente* El Diablito — the Little Devil. Not because he was little, but because we loved him. You know Angel Bantiling calls his wife Chiquita — Tiny One — and she is big as a carabao. El Diablito, I named my *teniente*, and we were afraid. If he had come down-stairs that night, we would all have run away. But what would you have? That Don Augusto was in the way, so my *teniente* took him off the board just like one of Don Antonio’s little men of chewed bread. That is the game. If one is afraid of it, there

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are other games one can play. One does not have to be a soldier. But he made us afraid, just the same.

"After Don Augusto was dead, all that part of the province was good, so they sent us to another part. Barang was the name of the town where we went. It was a better town; the people were good; we had nothing to do but drill. And after drill, often, my *teniente* took me to shoot with him. I would hold an empty bottle for beer in my hand, like that, and my *teniente* would shoot it from twenty paces with his revolver. Hoy, he was a devil at everything, my *teniente*! Hundreds and hundreds we broke, and he never hurt me. And he took me to be his servant in his quarters, and I was very happy, there in Barang."

Fermin Majusay gazed into the fire again, and his keen animal face was wonderfully softened in the flickering light.

"*Diós*," he sighed, "I was happy, there in Barang! Only one thing I did not like, — that was Isidro Abelarde. He was the leader of the town, the son of a very rich *haciendero*, young and handsome. And he became the friend of my *teniente*. They would laugh and

talk together for hours, and ride together, and I did not like it. We Macabebes have many enemies — all the Filipinos are our enemies — and we have to be suspicious always. I began to wonder why Isidro Abelarde wanted to be with my lieutenant. ‘Mi teniente,’ I said to him, ‘I do not like it that Don Isidro comes here. It is not good that he can pass the guard at any time, as if he were a white man. If he means harm —’

“My teniente laughed. ‘You are more bother than a wife, Fermin,’ he said. ‘Why should he mean harm to me?’

“‘He is the *pariente* — the relative — of Don Augusto,’ I said. My teniente looked at me, and I saw that he did not like to hear the name of Don Augusto. For a minute I was frightened — he had terrible eyes when he was angry. ‘How do you know that?’ he asked me.

“I would not tell him — we have ways of knowing things — and he got angrier, and struck me. It made my eye black, but I did not care. He was my teniente, any way, and he had been drinking. Next day I was glad of it, for Don Isidro came to dinner, and he looked at my eye. Often, when he thought no

one saw him, he looked at it. Then I had an idea. My *teniente* was very short with me, because he was sorry, and Don Isidro was so young it was not hard to make him think that I was angry with my *teniente*. I scowled at him all the time behind his back; you know how.

"After a few days Don Isidro met me in the *plaza* and said: 'Fermin, I am very sorry that the *teniente* struck you.'

"'Why are you sorry, Señor?' I asked him.

"'Because,' he said, 'the *teniente* is a friend of mine, and I hope that no harm will come to him. I have heard that a Macabebe never forgives a blow, but I hope you will be patient.'

"What a fool that young Isidro was! I looked very hard in his eyes, and I said, 'If a Macabebe forgives a blow as easily as a Bisayan forgets the death of his *pariente*, there is no danger for your friend — from me.'

"He looked at me, and all at once his lips twitched, and I knew I had him. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a little paper. 'Fermin,' he said, 'there is a sleeping-

powder. The *teniente* will not strike you again if you do not wish it.'

"That young fool knew nothing at all, like a baby! I took the paper home and my *teniente* and I gave some of it to a monkey. The monkey curled up and died, very quick. That was at night, and my *teniente* stood for a while and looked at the dead monkey and the paper. And he laughed just the way he did the morning the guard led in Don Augusto.

"Next morning I was putting the breakfast on the table, and my *teniente* was standing at the window of the *sala*, looking down at the *plaza*. And all at once I heard him laugh, not very loud, and he called: 'Hoy, Don Isidro! Have the complacency to come up, *amigo*. I have news for you.' And soon Don Isidro came up.

"Jesús Maria, he was a *pisaverde* that morning! White coat and breeches, and high boots of black leather, and silver spurs, and long gloves of soft white leather.

"'Have the good-heartedness to share my poor breakfast,' my *teniente* said, and Don Isidro sat down, and they ate till I had no patience left. But at last Don Isidro pushed

away his plate and leaned back in his chair and said, 'Now, *teniente mio*, what is this wonderful news?'

"My *teniente* pushed back his chair and offered his cigarette-case to Don Isidro. 'Take a long one, I beg,' he said.

"So Don Isidro selected an *entrelargos*, and I held a match for him, and then he smiled at my *teniente* through the smoke, and said: 'Our news, *amigo mio*. I die of suspense.'

"My *teniente* put the little packet which Don Isidro had given me on the table, and he looked at Don Isidro. I think the young fool knew then that the game was finished. But he was a brave one, I will say that, if he was a fool. He looked at the packet, and he looked at the *teniente*, and he looked at me and said, 'Traitor!'

" 'As you were, *Fermín*,' my *teniente* commanded me. 'Let me urge you as a friend, Don Isidro, to smoke slowly and without excitement, for when that cigarette is finished you will be finished.'

"Don Isidro's hand trembled a little, but he was not afraid. 'My compliments, *Señor Teniente*,' he said. 'You win again. Have our traitor bring a little water, and when I

am done smoking I will take the sleeping-powder.'

" 'I am sorry,' said my *teniente*, 'but a monkey ate it. And it would be unlawful to help you to commit suicide, anyway. Fermin, tell Raymundo to buckle on his revolver and be ready to escort Don Isidro down to — San Pablo.'

" ' *Dispensa*, mi *teniente*, ' I said. 'Does one ask a Macabebe to kill his officer, and call him a traitor, for nothing?'

" My *teniente* looked at me, and laughed. 'Get your own revolver then, Fermin,' he said.

" When I came back, Don Isidro's cigarette was very short. They both stood up, and my *teniente* said: ' *Adios*, Don Isidro. An easy journey to you in Fermin's friendly company, and a welcome in — San Pablo. Remember me particularly to your *pariente*, Don Augusto. I need not tell you, Fermin, that you must be very careful that he does not escape.'

" 'I will be very careful, mi *teniente*, ' I said, and we went away, and my *teniente* never knew that I made Don Isidro carry along a spade I saw in the guard-room. One does not call a Macabebe a traitor for nothing.

. . . There is no more wood, and it gets late and cold. Shall we sleep, or will you hear the rest of my story while our fire dies?

"*Bueno*. I will not be long. Some of this story got out, not much, for only I and my *teniente* knew it all, but it frightened the other Americans, and they said my *teniente* was crazy. *Sangre de Diós!* He was not crazy then, but only one of God's own little devils. He was crazy afterwards, perhaps, but they made him so. Listen while I tell you what they did to him.

"There is a little place very far back in the hills, Santo Spirito they call it, where the *frailes* used to go for a retreat. There is nothing there, just a big convent of stone where no one lives, and a few little dirty houses, and the mountains behind, and the jungle all around, and the only people are lazy Bisayanos who do no work and are half drunk with opium. And they sent my *teniente* there to eat his heart!

"Oh, he was brave! He was very brave, but there was nothing to do. That's why they sent us there; they knew we could do no harm. The mountain was empty, and there was no one in the jungle, and the people of

Santo Spirito were too lazy to be bad. But he was brave; he made work. We drilled long every day, and we made a parade-ground of the *plaza* in front of the convent, with culverts of concrete at the corners to carry off the water in the rainy season. That took many hours. But always there was the evening coming, when my *teniente* had to sit in the big *sala*, with the rats and the lizards squealing above him, and drink and drink and drink, and wait for the time when he could sleep.

“Hoy, that drinking! It frightened me, and I spoke to him about it. I could always speak to him, until the very end. He laughed at me. ‘Give me something else to do, then,’ he said. ‘Shall I go and say a mass in the chapel?’

“So he would sit and drink *aguardiente* for hours, and look at his boots. Sometimes he would be like himself for a little while, and then he would go for a ride, or shoot some bottles from my hand. But not for long. One day his hand was not steady, and he shot too close — *Aí, mi teniente!* He just dropped the revolver on the ground and said, ‘That’s the end of it at last, *Fermin,*’ and he

walked back to the convent, and his shoulders were like the shoulders of an old man.

"After that he went out no more, and I took my blankets into his room and slept on the floor, and all night long I could hear him tossing on his cot. Sometimes he would say, 'Are you there, Fermin?' and I would say, 'I am always here, mi teniente,' and then he would rest for a little while.

"But one night I woke and he was not on his cot. I got up to look and he came in from the balcony — there was one of those closed balconies all around the convent, outside the rooms — and he was dressed in his full uniform, and had his two revolvers and his shotgun. He did not seem to see me.

" 'Mi teniente!' I said.

"He looked where I was, and still he did not seem to see me. 'Keep a good lookout,' he said. 'They may come at any time.' He went out into the balcony again, and I could hear his feet — tramp, tramp, very slow — while he went down to the far end and came back on the other side.

"Aí, but I was scared! We were all scared, for every night after that we could hear his feet, and he never seemed to see us, but some-

times he would call: 'On guard, there! They may come at any time.' We were all scared, but we did all we could, if we were frightened. Not one of us ran away, not even that baby José.

"And then the end came, the end of the game for my *teniente*. Five days I brought his food and he never touched it, only drank *aguardiente* instead. And five nights, all night long, we heard him marching round and round the balcony, with his two revolvers and his shotgun. The last night I was so tired that I fell asleep. I do not know how long I slept, but all at once I heard my *teniente* call 'Halt!' and then I heard him laugh, and then his feet, quick, as if he ran, and then a crash on the ground outside. I ran, and some of the guard ran, and we found him lying on the flagstones of the patio, dead where he had fallen.

"That is the way they killed my *teniente*, — my *teniente* who might have been Governor-General of the world if they had let him play the game. He was not afraid of the end of it. Even when he was crazy, and heard the enemies we could not see coming, he only laughed and ran out to meet them."

A last ember of the fire flamed up, and Fermin Majusay turned his face quickly from the telltale light. "It was a long story," he said, and loosened his revolver in the holster. "Sleep without fear, Señor," he said. "No one will trouble us while I am here."

CHAPTER III

THE LITTLE MAN

It would be hard to say whether the porter or I was most bewildered by our meeting, for I, mind you, had made a long journey on the mountain with Fermin Majusay, looking for a certain butterfly you wouldn't be interested in, and had spent a whole night by the fire which Fermin made, while the porter had only to go to the other end of the courtyard of the temple of Tzin Piaôu with his water-jug. Yet we returned from our respective errands at the same moment, and met at the door of my heathen tutor's cell! The porter came within an ace of letting the jug fall, and I dare say I should have done the same thing, if I had had a jug.

The old gentleman looked up at Nang and me, and into us, and through us, with eyes that smiled into vacancy, and at that moment, I think, I first began to entertain some doubts of his complete benevolence.

"Well, Nang," purred the old gentleman from his slab, "what's the matter with you?"

"Holy One," stammered the porter, "not two pipes ago I let this gentleman out to go on a long journey. And here he is. And he has not come back, for I barred the gate behind him."

"Oh, well, Nang, what difference does *that* make?" purred the Holy One, soothingly. "You may go now."

The porter went away, shaking his head and muttering, and my heathen priest and I were left alone together.

"And have you had," said he, raising himself a little on his hollowed slab, "an easy and a pleasant journey?"

"I did not go for pleasure," I answered sulkily, for I felt that he was mocking me.

"Ah, yes," he answered quickly, "it was for instruction. I forgot. And did you gain instruction from my Little Gods?"

"This time you sent me," I reminded him, "to see some Little Devils."

The spark in his eyes flickered into flame again. "Did I!" he murmured, purringly as a cat. "How I keep forgetting. But after

all, it's merely a matter of names. Did you like what you saw?"

"No," I answered bluntly, "I did not. Your Little Gods, or your Little Devils, whatever you choose to call them, seem to me the veriest fiends. And cowardly fiends, at that. They catch men like rats, in traps, and drown them, helpless, as men drown rats."

"My son," purred my old heathen priest, "I wouldn't call them cowards, if I were you. They might not like it."

"Like it or not," said I, hotly, "they are cowards, if what I've seen of them is a fair sample of their ways. Do they never give a man a fair chance, in the open, to fight for his life, and for things dearer to him than life?"

"For life and things dearer than life," echoed my old heathen priest, and yawned, ever so slightly, and stretched his old legs out on his slab. "Dear me, I don't see why they shouldn't. Though of course I know nothing about it. Suppose," he suggested, "you look that up for yourself. I dislike to seem selfish, but really this is an hour which I invariably devote to a nap."

He made a little imperative, dismissing gesture with his hand, and —

"An' this," says big Terry Clancy, reaching over and getting a grip on the little man's collar, "this is our Scuts, the married man."

I never served in a company yet—and I've served in so many, first and last, that I'll never do anything else—I never served in a company yet that didn't have a bully and a fool in it. You can always tell them. No one ever dares to cuss out the bully, and somebody is all the time cussin' out the fool. In the old company the bully was Clancy, relieving me, as Special Orders says. We had some argument about it at first, being about of a size and the biggest men there, but Terry was younger than me, and he relieved me. The fool was a poor little yellow dog that we called Scuts. I don't even remember his name. He was the most helpless, discouraged, weak-eyed little *hombre* the sun ever dodged behind a cloud to keep from shining on. Worse than that, he had cold feet. All through the China campaign he was so scared he needn't have been afraid at all. A bullet couldn't hit such a little wrinkled, pinched-up thing as he was, even if it wanted to. But of course he got it worse than if he'd been just

plain fool. The company don't stand for cold feet.

Even the officers got to jollyin' about him. "The little man," the Captain always called him. "H'm," grunts the Captain, the day we was getting it so bad in front of Tientsin. One of them club-footed Chinese bullets had just bored through his leg, and it looked like he'd bleed to death before the Doctor could fix him up. "H'm. Artery gone, you say? Where's the little man? He's just about the size to crawl in and hang onto it till you're ready to tie it. H'm."

It was the boys telling that to each other, and the Old Man's sending down the line afterwards to know if anybody had the makings of a cigarette, that kept the company from breaking that day, I reckon. We got it hard. If the Old Man had been with us after that, Scuts would sure have had to go. But he being in hospital, the Lieutenant just took the whole outfit with him, the part that could walk, anyway, and Scuts went back to Manila with us, and down to Samar.

"An' this," says Terry, picking Scuts off the bench and shaking him careless, like he was a rag baby, "is the idol of his company,

the bold bad soldier lad that won the heart an' tuba-stand of the prettiest little brown girl in Samar. Boys," says he, spinning the little man round with a thumb and finger in the back of his neck, "let me present the husband of the beauteous Marie. Bow to the gentlemen, Scutsy."

"Aw, lemme go, Terry," says Scuts, blushing pink inside of his yellow skin, and grinning like a puppy that's just been kicked. "Aw, you lemme go."

"You set down, Scuts," says Terry, spinning him round again and laying him on the bench. "Set down an' tell us all about it. Give us a tip. We're all wantin' to know how you did it. We might want to get married ourselves some day."

"Aw, you gwan," says Scuts, twistin' round, with that little damp grin of his. "You're joshin' me."

"Man," says Terry, "'tis no josh. Honor bright, we're all envyin' you gettin' a fine pretty little girl like that. Eh, Casey?" he says to me.

"Straight goods," says I. "The little man pulled down a cold hand that deal."

"Hear that, Scutsy?" says Terry. "Come on, now, and tell us about it."

"Aw," says Scuts, throwing a chest as big around as my arm, and twisting a few white hairs on his upper lip, which was his way of wagging his tail, "Aw," he says, "Marie, aw — I kind of helped her keepin' her books, y' know, showin' her how to spell the boys' names an' all that business, an' we got to be pretty good friends. An' one day she says to me, 'Scuts, all the girls but me has got American man, an' they laugh at me,' she says. 'Scuts, I want a 'Merican man myself.' 'All right,' I says, never thinkin' of myself, 'I'll tell the boys.' 'Scuts,' she says, 'I got plenty *dinero* sellin' *tuba* to the boys, an' I likes you. You be my man.' Aw," says Scuts, twistin' the hairs, "I looked at her, an' I seen she was pretty fair-lookin', so I says, 'All right, Marie.' An' I ain't ashamed of it, neither," says Scuts, looking round with his big blue eyes, as the crowd begins to laugh. "She's 'bout th' nicest girl in this town, I reckon," Scuts says.

"Scuts, you gobble the pot," says Terry, twisting him off the bench. "You run along to Marie right now, an' tell her to be sure and

wrap a blanket round you before she puts you to bed. Wouldn't that beat hell, now," he says to us, watching the little man trot off down-town. "They're all alike," he says. "Give a white one fifty plunks to buy a dog, an' she'll come back with a blear-eyed, knock-kneed pug, and give a brown one a chance at th' company, an' she picks out Scuts. Marie's a good, girl, too. That's th' worst of it. Th' better they are th' less they know," says Terry, "an' by th' time they get all th' *sabe* they need, nobody'd take th'm for a gift. Who's comin' over in th' grove an' drink a cocoanut?"

This was along before Balangiga, and things were running easy, the Old Man being still in hospital, and the Lieutenant being only a boy. A straight boy he was, but not sure yet how he ought to take us. The country was quiet and the people friendly as bugs, and we got careless. About half the boys was sleepin' out of quarters off and on, and the Top didn't say anything. I don't blame him. Of course me and Terry and a lot of other old-timers didn't go in for that way of doing business, but it's different with a boy. The only home he has while he's in the service is the kind he can make by hanging up his hat and order-



ing the drinks, and he takes it pretty rough if you don't let him have that in a place like the Philippines. So we went drifting along with only two sentries posted, and the quarters half empty every night, never looking for any trouble.

But one afternoon Scuts came trotting in, looking as yellow as Durham, and had a *hab-lar* with the Top, and then they both went across to the Lieutenant's quarters. They didn't come out till just before Assembly went for Retreat, and we smelled something. Sure enough, orders was read to keep magazines loaded, carry two hundred rounds in the belt, and not be absent from quarters between sunset and sunrise. Soon as we were dismissed, we got after Scuts.

"The natives had it fixed to rush us at night," he says. "Marie tipped me off. She told me not to be out of quarters to-night, an' th' Top, he figured out the rest," says Scuts, shortsighting, you might say, out into the underbrush as if he expected to see a gang of bolomen, and holding tight to his rifle.

"An' th' lady, she had another friend," sings out Piggy O'Neil. The crowd laughs, and Scuts turns a dirty pink again.

"Aw," he says, "she wouldn't tell me no lie. She's a good straight girl."

Then we began to debate it, the way we always do in the Army, if it's only a question of how far it is from New York to the moon, and finally everybody called everybody else a liar and we went to sleep.

In the morning everything was quiet and peaceful, so after drill the crowd was beginning to jolly Scuts for fair, when the operator stuck his head out of the window.

"Come up here, some of you, for God's sake," he says, and we didn't stop to ask questions. He was bending over his ticker, white as a sheet. "I'm a fool, all right," he says, "but this is sure gettin' on my nerve. There was a message started to go through from Balangiga ten minutes ago, and all to once — Hear that!" he says. The machine gave a jerky little chatter. "It's like a man sendin' in his sleep," says the operator. "For ten mortal minutes that thing has been stuttering halves of words."

"Who is it?" asks Terry.

"Murphy's sendin'," says the operator.

"Then he's jokin' with ye," says Terry.

"Billy always was a great hand for his —"

"Huh?" grunts the operator, bending over, as she begun to stutter again.

"What's he saying?" somebody asked, but the operator didn't seem to hear him. Then all at once he began to talk in a voice that didn't belong to him.

"Balangiga," he read, "seven-ten A. M. Company — attacked by — bolomen — while at — breakfast. Rifles in quarters. Fought with — dishes and — knives and forks — but — no good —"

"God!" says somebody, and a dozen say, "Shut up."

But the operator didn't seem to mind. "Look out for — yourselves," he read. And then he begun to call out a list of names, very slow, and between each one you could hear the crowd draw a long breath. "Sullivan — Brewster — Fleishart — Nickerson —"

"Is that Tommy Nickerson?" says somebody.

"Shut up," says Terry.

"But Tommy was my bunk for three —"

"— Slavin —" reads the operator — "Kelly — Hunt —" and so he goes on, Terry checking off till we thought he never would stop. "Forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven,



“Fought with — dishes and — knives and forks.”

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fourty-eight," he says. Then the machine stopped talking. "That's all," says Terry. "Fourty-eight good men that they've killed —"

"Huh?" grunts the man again, and then the machine began to click very slow, and the operator's eyes bulged out of his head. "Murphy!" he says. "Christ," he says, "it can't be Murphy. Murphy's sendin'. Billy," he says, jabbing at his key and then listening. The machine clicked once or twice and then stopped. The operator turns round to us. "It's Billy," he says. "Billy's been sendin' this, an' he's dead." The big fellow just dropped down on his table and cried.

We looked at him and we looked at each other, and then we went down-stairs on tip-toe, like there was a dyin' man in the house. "Fourty-nine," says Terry, whispering like — "fourty-nine men of the regiment killed at breakfast, with no show to help themselves. God! And we might a got the same thing only — Scuts," he says, "where's that little woman o' yours?"

"Warn't she straight?" says Scuts, throwing his chest.

"You poor fool," Terry shouts, "go and

get her up here before those devils suspect she told us. Take your rifle, damn you," he says, as the little man trotted off. "Fourty-nine o' them killed fightin' with their mess-kits. God!"

Just as we was getting into our kits, Scuts comes back. "I can't find her," he says. "I ast her mother, an' she just grinned at me," he says, staring out of the window as if he expects to see her there. "I can't find her," he says. "Terry, do you s'pose —"

"Scuts," Terry yells at him, "you get ready to go out on this patrol with us. Do you hear, or have I got to bat you?" he says, like he meant it.

We scouted down through the town, the people smiling at us just as friendly as ever, and never a sign of Marie could we get. So we swung out through the paddies and circled the town, coming back toward the quarters through the grove of cocoa-palms. The Lieutenant was on the point, and all at once he stopped short. We pushed up, and there, tied to a big palm-tree, was something I've tried hard to forget. 'Twouldn't have been so bad if she had just been dead, but all at once she —

"They cut her all to pieces an' it didn't kill her," says Scuts, surprised like.

The Lieutenant pulls his gun. "Right or wrong, I can't stand that," he says, and fires.

The little man never flinched at the report. "They cut her all to pieces, an' it didn't kill her," he says again, kind of like a phonograph.

"You get out of here, Scuts," says Terry, grabbing him by the shoulder and whirling him round.

"You leave me be," whines the little man. "God!" he says. "Cut her like that, an' it didn't kill her! An' her such a soft little thing —"

"Damn you, Scuts," says Terry, "will you cut it out, or have I got to break your head?"

"Aw, you lemme alone," whines Scuts, meek as ever. "I'm a goin', ain't I?" And he turns and trots back to quarters, never saying another word.

When we told the boys, there was cursing like you won't hear often outside the service, but after Terry had took them out in the grove in squads of half a dozen, they just stopped talking and sat down quiet in the sun, cleaning their rifles and looking at the town over across the parade. All at once, a rifle cracked, and

a native over there cut for cover like a hen. The Lieutenant came running down.

"Whose gun was that?" he asks.

Old John Slattery, the oldest man in the company, with twenty-eight years in, gets up slow and stiff, and salutes. "Mine, sir," he says. "I was workin' the cartridges out of the magazine, an' she must've gone off accidental."

The boy just looks at us for about a minute. "The next one of you that fires a shot without orders," he says, "will stand up against the convent wall there in front of a squad, if I'm the only man in the squad. When the time comes," he says, "you'll have all the shooting you want. Until then, you'll leave the natives alone, or you'll have to kill me."

It was hard holding in, thinking of Marie over there among the palm-trees, and the boys in Balangiga, and Billy Murphy making his little speech over the wire; but the Lieutenant was right, and when the orders did come, we didn't have any kick coming about the way he let us carry them out. It was the roughest little old fighting I've ever been through.

You'd naturally thought the little man would brace up and get into it, after seeing

what he'd seen. But he just got peaked and meeker every day. Seemed like he was half asleep, and only woke up long enough to talk about his dreams. And his talk was enough to drive you loco.

One night we'd just come into camp, when Terry pitched his rifle away and dug for his boot as fast as he could. "Damn that ant," he says. "Who'd think a little thing like that could bite worse'n a good big horse-fly?"

"Terry," says Scuts, "how do you reckon it feels to have millions of red ants crawlin' all over you, an' you all cut an' —"

"Damn you, Scuts," says Terry, reaching for him and cuffing him, "will you shut up?"

At last one day we ran into them in full force in a little meadow that was broken up with clumps of bamboo and tall grass. We started firing in close order, for it's dangerous to get spread out in country like that, when you're fighting men with knives. But after a while, them rushing first one side of the line and then the other, and us getting after them with the bayonet, we opened out. Finally we got 'em going just like we wanted 'em, in bunches. We'd fire as they ran till they had to drop into cover, and then we'd rush

'em with the bayonet and butt. It was the easiest sort of going, more like chasing rabbits than men, and when the recall blowed we had only five men missing, Scouts among them. The Lieutenant sent out half a dozen of us to hunt them up, and in a little hollow, 'way ahead of where anybody else had gone, we found the little man lying curled up on his face looking comfortable, the way a man that's been killed quick most always does. Around him there was a heap of dead natives, no wounded ones. Terry turned him over. He had a bolo in his hand, and he was smiling his little weak-eyed smile.

"The son of a gun!" says Terry, gulping. "The damn little son of a gun! What the hell are you fellers standin' there for?" he says to us, picking up the little man and laying him over his shoulder. "There's four other lads you've got to find before sundown."

CHAPTER IV

A LITTLE RIPPLE OF PATRIOTISM

"You are bold, my son, at any rate," murmured my heathen priest, blandly smiling through me into vacancy. "The last man to knock at the gate of Tzin Piaôu with his foot, found the foot grown fast to the stone. They had to cut it off to set him free. That must have been a hundred years ago, more or less. I forget. The foot, with the gate-post attached to it, is standing in the Great Hall of the Images. Relic, you know. It's rather interesting, it's so out of the common run of relics. You might like to glance at it?"

"No, indeed," I said hastily. Something in my old gentleman's blandness was anything but reassuring. "I beg Tzin Piaôu's pardon, I am sure," said I. "And," said I, pulling out my purse, "if in my hurry I was unfortunate enough to injure the door in any way, I'd be more than glad —"

"Not at all, not at all," my old gentleman assured me. "It's a very solid door, indeed."

"I'm so glad of that," said I, putting up my purse.

"Still," purred the old gentleman thoughtfully, "of course one can never tell just how a god may feel about irreverence. In cases of doubt, the small precaution of an offering —"

I handed him a piece of gold, and he stowed it away, very carefully, in his girdle, just over the pit of his stomach. "My son," he said benignantly, "through me, his representative, Tzin Piaôu deigns to thank you and assure you that all is forgotten."

Receiving the thanks of a god was such an unwonted experience to me that I was not sure I could acknowledge them in proper form. So I bowed, and held my tongue. There are worse moves, in tight places, for one who can bow with dignity.

"And now, my son," said my old gentleman, poking subconsciously with the forefinger of his right hand at a hard spot just over his stomach, "tell me what has put you out. For you *are* put out."

"It's your infernal Little Gods," said I, boldly. "I'm sick of them."

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"My infernal Little Gods!" he murmured. "What a curious conjunction of contradictory terms. And so you are sick of them. Why?"

"Their taste seems to run wholly to Tragedy," I complained, "and such dingy Tragedy. And such unnecessary Tragedy. How they do work to entangle some childish negro giant, some weak simpleton of a common soldier —"

My old gentleman yawned, hard as he strove to conceal the fact. "You must excuse me," he purred, when he saw that I had seen, "but really, at this hour — Suppose," he suggested, sinking back on his slab, "you watch a Farce or two, by way of change. How will that do?"

"If you think there are any Farces in the Orient," I said doubtfully, "I'm sure I'd be very glad —"

"It's easy to find out," said he, and moved his hand a little, and — I heard a voice speaking, an even, drawling, dryly humorous voice. This is what it said.

"Want passes, eh? Twelve-hour passes? H'm," says the Captain. Me and Big Terry Clancy and three or four others was standin' up in front of him with three months' pay in our blouses, lookin' pleasant and harmless for

a fare-ye-well. "H'm," he says, "you're a fine bunch. Can you remember you're in Maniller now, not Samar?"

"We can, sir," says Terry.

"H'm. Take your mouth out fr'm under your chin, Clancy," says th' Old Man. "It looks better. H'm. Well, go along with ye, and if ye get into trouble ast th' Lord to have mercy on your crazy heads, for ye know well by this time that I won't," he says.

With that he signs the passes, an' that's where he let us all in for it. Yes, sir, me and Terry an' th' Old Man and the Regiment and the Little Brown Brother and the C. G. all had ours comin' right then, on'y we didn't know about it, not yet. We thought we was just homeward bound, and we wanted a little fun with Maniller to make up for the deepprivations of the Samar campaign. We got it all right.

"H'm," says the Captain, dealin' us the passes. "I'm sorry f'r Maniller, but ye have earned a little reelaxation. Don't forget you're f'r guard to-morrer, Casey," he says to me, an' we saluted an' hit th' trail.

Terry and me clumb into a two-wheeled chicken-coop wagon outside the Barracks, and th' horse not bein' only boy's size we lifted

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him by th' slings, th' pair of us, and just naturally wandered on tiptoe down to th' New Bridge. They give you th' biggest schooner of San Magill f'r your *peseta* there. New Bridge is th' name. Anybody can tell you.

We had some beers, and then we went across to Mrs. Smith's, and got a steak that never seen a tin can, and then we went back to the New Bridge and met up with some more of th' Army. There was an Engineer't could deal himself th' coldest hand of talk I ever bucked up against, and two Coast Artillerys, and a Marine, an Irishman named Schleimacher, that Clancy remembered helpin' to stuff a jade idol into his blouse, up in Peking those happy days. Maybe there was others. I don't remember.

I don't remember a whole lot of things about that day. Some way, the beer was cold, and along in the middle of th' afternoon my thoughts got to herdin' close, an' it was more'n I could do to cut some of th'm out of th' bunch an' read th' brands on th'm. There must a been strays around, too, for all of a sudden I got to cryin' about me dear ould mither an' th' little cabin — *Me!* I was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, in a tenement, and I

pulled my freight for Arizona as soon as I could walk. But I sure was cryin' about that thought, whoever it belonged to, and the Engineer ast me what th' trouble was, and I told on myself.

"Gentlemen o' France," says he — I ain't quotin' him exact, f'r I'm no college graduate — "Gentlemen o' France, *and* Ireland, what say you to charterin' a couple of wagons, large, glad wagons with rubber tires, and carryin' our brother out to refresh his homesick eyes on th' emerald, sunburnt sod of th' Luneta, whilst Professor Lovering's gu-gu band flirts with sweet music and we watches th' sunset glow on Mariveles?"

Yes, sir, right off'n th' bat he showed down a hand of talk like that, all aces an' better. It fazed us f'r a minute. He was a warm boy, that Engineer. But old Terry was game.

"Son of th' pick-axe an' th' thebolite," he says, startin' to play up, "lead on," he says, "that is — if — if ye mean go to th' band concert, we're with ye while th' money lasts," he finishes, winded.

So we gets a couple of victoriers, two horses apiece, footmen and all, and strikes for th' Luneta, makin' full as much show as any

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civilian clerk in th' Q. M. D. More, maybe, f'r that Irishman Schleimacher wants to put his feet up on th' box. We tried to make him ride decent, but th' Engineer butted in. "Let him be," he says. "Otherwise what's th' use of th' footman, anyway?" So Sly kep' them up there, and I reckon we attracted a lot of attention that didn't cost us a cent.

By the time we got out there by the beach, th' air had cleared up my head some, and I sat up and began to take notice. And about the first thing I noticed hard was Terry. He'd quit talkin', an' there was a hell uv a disdainful look on that two-foot face of his, and he took off his hat to the flagpole when we went by it, second trip round. I'd ought to have stopped th' game right then. There's two kinds of Irish, if y' ever noticed, — common wild ones that generally has the luck to meet Old Trouble when she comes marchin' down th' street, comp'ny front; and th' fancy kind that could recruit a while bunch o' trouble right in th' middle of Paco bone-heap. Terry's that last kind, and when he gets low-spirited and patriotic and full of beer, it's time to hunt for the tall and uncut.

Well, the band kep' on a playin', an' th'

sun kep' on a settin' and we kep' on a drivin' round and round that mangy bunch o' grass, and ev'ry trip Terry got glummer and glummer. After a while, he says to me: "Look at th' pretty ladies, Casey, all th' pretty ladies in white dresses an' talcum powder, if not worse. An' spot th' gay young grafters in th' morgidged rigs. You and me can't speak to th' likes of them, Casey. We're nothin' but soldiers. That's all. Just soldiers, gettin' it in th' neck for fifteen-sixty per. Oh, hell!" he says, and spits hard and straight at a swell native in white clothes, that was waitin' for us to pass, "Look at him with shoes on, like a white man! Ain't there a ripple o' patriotism in th' whole damned outfit? There's th' old flag flyin' up above th'm, an' they never think of it. Just ride around and flirt with each other, and let natives walk around with shoes on, like white men. They make me sick. I'm on'y a soldier, an' I suppose th' Army is th' on'y place f'r lads like me and you —" he says.

He's ready to cry, an' th' Engineer butts in to change th' subjick.

"So say our long-suffering parents and sweethearts," he says.

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"Pontoons," says Terry, talkin' fr'm about an inch below his stummick, "you're a lively lad with y'r tongue, but ye lack dep'. I ain't known ye long, an' I hope I ain't to know ye much longer, but I can see ye lack more dep' 'n any man I ever met. There's moments in th' life of a real man ye couldn't no more understand 'n a Chinese storekeeper. An' this is one of th'm," he says, pullin' his hat down over his eyes.

He didn't say no more, but when th' nigger band struck up th' Umpty-dee-he-hee-*heee* music, to show it was all over now, Terry got up slow and stiff, and threw a chest and squeezed his hat to his left breast and stood there in th' rig, lookin' considerable like some gen'ral's you and me've seen. He kep' on standin' there after th' music had stopped, and after a while it got tiresome, and th' Engineer told th' *cochero* to *sigue* ahead.

"*Hindi!*" says Terry. "Don't you believe it. You're like all th' rest," he says to us, plumb disgusted. "You call yourselves soldiers, and all you think about is just chow. *Chow*, at a moment like this! There ain't a ripple of patriotism in the whole bunch of ye big enough to grease a twenty-two cartridge."

And he made us drive up and down th' Malecon twice in th' moonlight before he'd go to supper.

While we was chowin', he kep' gettin' grumper an' grumper, and after supper, when th' Engineer wanted to be gettin' back to quarters — he was livin' over'n old Santiaygo — Terry just busted loose.

"Pontoons," he says, "I t'ought you was a man. You're big enough f'r one. Run away an' join th' Naytional Guard. Go an' be a pinkety-pink Vol'nteer, an' tell th' nurs'ry-sergeant not to wake you up without your p'rmission. Go an' dog-rob f'r a c'mission. Go an' do this an' do that," he says, thinkin' up a whole lot of places f'r th' Engineer to go, till fin'lly he got so ugly-ugly we took him into th' New Bridge again, and bought him a drink to calm him down.

It didn't do no good. He kep' one eye on his glass an' th' other on the Engineer, an' slung hot air till you wouldn't think a big guy like that would stand f'r it. But th' Engineer just grins and drinks his beer.

"Gentlemen," he says, "gentlemen and friend Clancy, there's a hard-hearted son of Plymouth Rock commands th' comp'ny that'll

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be roundin' up all th' poor little devils to check roll-call six times a day before he's been dead a month. He'll mult me a month's pay f'r missin' Retreat to-night — not that th' pleasure of enjoyin' you ain't worth th' price," he says to Terry, "but I might just as well miss Taps now, an' get a month in th' jug besides. What's th' use of freedom without money? To-night we have both, and we'll pour them out like blood, to soothe th' feelin's of a friend whose heart is sad to think th' flag which decked his cradle now floats over th' school-houses of th' brave but ex-tremely eelusive Fillypeeners."

Terry's mouth sort of hung open when th' Engineer struck his pace, but he brightened up quick as he got on to the drift of it.

"Ye read my feelin's like a *padre*," he says to him, "an' I like your build. If you was on'y in th' comp'ny, it's many a fight we'd have together, an' we may have one even yet. Here's lookin' at ye! You're a soldier, you are, *and* a gentleman. Here's how."

Of course we had a beer on the Engineer after that, and two on the Coast Artillerys, who'd been sayin' little all day and drinkin' hearty. Th' poor devils get that way, bein'

stationed mostly near big cities like Portland, Maine, an' Guam, where chanstes are few since th' Christian Temp'rance persons got their strangle-holt. And then our A. O. H. friend, Schleimacher, sets them up an' says: "Fellers, a sailor like me —"

"Don't you miscall yourself; you're more of soldier than a heap of th' muts I herd with," says Terry, takin' a sling at us, "but ye do loot like a sailor," he says.

"I'm a soldier at sea, all right," says th' Marine. "I'm seasick as an Army Transport ev'ry trip. I was talkin' when you butted in. A sailor like me don't have many look-ins f'r what you might call reefined amusements. Cavite's mostly give up to drill an' cock-fights. I moves we all go to a nigger theayter to-night, where there's sure to be plenty doin', such as it is."

We went, victoriers and all, and Old Trouble must a been howlin' f'r joy to see us comin'. When we got there, there was a big crowd outside, and we got wedged up against one of th' stands where th' girls sell bananas and cigarettes an' such truck. One of th'm — a pretty good-lookin' girl she was, too — smiles at Terry, and he opens up a conversa-

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tion, and fin'ly he says to me: "'Tis a long time since I've et a hard-boiled egg. I'm goin' to have a couple if they're fresh.

"*Frescoes?*" he asts, pointin' to the eggs. "*Wavoes frescoes?*" *Fresco* means cool in common bamboo Spanish, but he was usin' a private Castilian brand of his own. "*Wavoes frescoes?*" he asts. "Is the eggs cool?" Th' girl laughs.

"*Como helados, chiquito mio,*" she says, laughin'. "Like ice, my honey-bunch," she says.

"Give me two, then, an' keep th' change," says Terry. "*Dos!* You're a neat little gu-gu," he says, holdin' up his two fingers.

He broke one of his eggs, and he dropped it quick.

"Ye little merrocker-leather daughter o' sin and shame," he says to th' girl — I ain't quotin' *him* exact neither — "ye little two-f'r-a-cent bunch o' calicker," he says, mixin' in some other words on the side, "bein' a lady, I can't say what I think of you, but it ain't such a hell uv a much. Don't ye grin at *me!* I might have *et* that! If it had on'y knowed enough to *peep,*" he says to us, "it needn't never have got boiled alive. *Wavoes frescoes!*

Damn a country where a pretty girl will lie to you f'r half a cent. I'll keep th' other one till I'm sure hungry," he says, an' slips his other egg into his pocket.

He kep' on mutterin' to himself while he was squeezin' up to th' little window, and a good tight squeeze we had. Y' see, old Ma Trouble¹ had c'llected a special crowd f'r the occasion, but we never noticed that. We just hiked ahead, and havin' plenty of money — though little of it was left by that time — we bought a box, and went in.

Maybe you've never been in a gu-gu theayter. Th' floor is th' ground, an' that's the orchestray. Around that runs a row of boxes without any fronts or backs or tops or sides. Behind them is th' balcony. Well, we swell guys pikes up to our box and starts in to be th' real thing. In one of them theayters you want to keep your hat on till th' curtain rises, an' smoke cigarettes an' look round at th' women. They expects it. That was easy f'r us, an' th' Engineer gets up a two-handed game of eyes with a chocolate-colored dame

¹ It is interesting to note that Private Casey himself seems half aware that some maliciously mirthful over-power is concerned in his adventures. But why does he feminize it?

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that begins to look entanglin'. But Terry broke it up.

"Turn round," he says. "Cut it out. She'll be settin' in your lap in a minute, an' stealin' th' buttons off'n your blouse. Don't ye trust any of th'm," he says. "*Wavoes frescoes!*"

And right there old Ma plays her joker. That drayma we'd come so far to see was called "Kahapon —" but maybe you don't *sabe hablar* Fillypeener. "Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrer," was th' name. Th' first act was Yesterday. That was Spain. There was nothin' much doin' f'r a while. Just talkin' slow an' keepin' your hand on your knife, a good deal like that Greaser show that come to San Antone once. But after a while, a priest showed up. He was one of th' Friars, and they knocked him down first off, an' then they kicked him all over th' stage, and sat on him and raised a rough-house with him for fair. Them *Frailes* must a been a long-sufferin' bunch, Yesterday.

They'd just tossed him out of sight, when a lot of Spanish soldiers come on and th' real shootin' begun. Well, sir, th' Fillypeeners cleaned them Greasers out for keeps, an' th'

little leadin' lady grabs th' Spanish flag an' rips it up th' middle an' promenades on th' pieces. Th' house went wild at that, and while they was clappin' an' shoutin', the sun of Filly-peener liberty begun to rise at th' back of the stage. It was a shaky old sun with three K's on its face, like freckles. I see Terry fumblin' in his pocket for somethin', and then, just as th' sun is gettin' fairly up, somethin' puts th' poor thing's eye out, and th' curtain falls quick.

"*Waves frescoes!*" Terry sings out.

Well, sir, things livened up somethin' wonderful just about then. All th' natives in th' place, about a thousand of th'm, begun to yowl like cats and crowd toward our box, and half a dozen Spaniards, or half-Spaniards, was yellin' "*Brayvo el Americano!*" and some Americans that was scattered round th' audience was movin' up at th' double without sayin' anythin'.

"Nothin' doin', boys," Terry yells to them, standin' up, and a big man he looked. "Scat!" he says to th' natives. "*Sigue Dagupan*, you *Kittycattypunanos*, before I chew you up," he says, and makes like he was goin' to jump down among th'm.

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They scatted all right, and we pulled Terry down, quiet enough, on'y his shoulders was twitchin' under his blouse. "Casey," he says to me, "I always took the Fillypeeners f'r Catholics till I seen th'm maul that *padre*, an' I've been gentle with th'm on that account. God help th' next one I lay foot to."

"I mistrust this is one of th' seditious plays we read about," th' Engineer whispers to me, "and I reckon To-day will be worse than Yesterday, f'r the big man. Hadn't we better get him out of here?"

"His patriotism is sure ripplin' lively," I says.

"An' did ye never read th' po'm," says th' lad, "about th' pebble dropped in th' middle of th' ocean, an' th' ripples it kicked up?"

"I never read no po'try," I says, "if I see it first, but something'll be kicked up f'r keeps, if Terry ever drops down in that crowd." And then th' house quieted down, an' th' curtain went up f'r th' next act.

To-day was us, th' Americans. A little gen'ral with pompydoor hair — that looked natch'ral — walked round f'r a while, hablaring to his crowd, and then six men in khaki came in, carryin' th' flag, and th' other gang began to

shoot them up. It warn't pretty to watch, on'y we didn't have time to watch it much. Th' Engineer an' me had one of Terry's arms, and Schleimacher was tryin' to keep a hand over his mouth and not get bit. Th' talk he was tryin' to make was shockin'. But we held him all right till th' Americans was lyin' round th' stage picturesque and dead as hell. An' then th' little girl grabs th' flag, and you could hear the audience draw a long breath.

I didn't think she'd dare to do it, but I suppose it was on th' programme and they didn't want to give no money back. Sure enough she spits on it an' tosses it on th' floor, and then — well, Terry brushes the Engineer and me out of his way, and steps up on the edge of the box and makes his little speech. "Boys!" he yells, "remember Balangiga an' th' rest of th' tricks they've played us. That's th' flag," and he hops down to the floor.

"Come on," I yells to the Engineer. "If he gets on that stage alone, it'll be murder," and down we jumps.

It was like slippin' off a ford into quick water. The women was screechin' and the men howlin' and the boys behind us was laughin' and shoutin' and bangin' every head

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that came their way, and some fool begun to let off a gun into the roof. But th' Engineer and me just kep' on down that aisle after Terry. Just when he reached th' musicians, the curtain came down, but he picks a fiddler, fiddle and all, and tosses him into th' rotten old cloth like a sack of beans, and goes through th' hole after him.

But it stopped him up enough so't the Engineer and me clumb through onto the stage right behind him. We piled onto him just as he was makin' a rush f'r a bunch of actors, and there was a good lively mix-up f'r a few seconds. Men began to come through the curtain in a dozen places, and th' racket in the house doubled up. I don't know just everythin' that happened, f'r th' minute Terry gave in a bit, we drug him out th' back way and cut up an alley, never stoppin' to find out where Schleimacher and the Artillerys was. And I s'pose them victoriers is out front there yet, waitin' for their money. And I'll bet there never was no To-morrer in that drayma, not that night.

We got out onto the corner where there's a saloon, and then we stopped to listen. Same as always, the minute Terry couldn't do no

more harm, he was gentle as a child. "There's patriotism around all right," he says, cockin' his head toward the racket back at the theayter. "It on'y needs somebody to stir it up. I'll bet anybody five to one in beers that somebody gets hurt out of this before it's over," he says, as a extry loud howl and a ripple of shots busts loose fr'm the theayter, and a patrol-wagon comes ting-tingin' it down the street. "I make it beer," says Terry, "because I'm thirsty."

"Take you and lose," says th' Engineer. "Step in here and we'll pay up one of th'm now."

So we stepped in there, and we stepped in sev'ral other places, till we sort of got th' habit. I reckon we traveled all over Maniller after that, and had beers with about half th' Army. Th' last thing I remember, Terry had got patriotic again, an' was sayin' a po'm about th' flag. Then my thoughts got to advancin' in regimental formation, and I sort of went to sleep.

Th' dinky little guard-mount march was goin' next mornin' — I reckon it was *next* mornin' — when I woke up, so I knew somethin' was wrong. I reached f'r my rifle, me

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bein' warned for guard that day, and I found I was in th' guard-house a'ready, and Terry was poundin' his ear on a bunk beside me. My head felt like a caraboo had walked on it, an' I yelled to the sentry for water.

"The ice-water's over'n th' corner, same as always," he says, peekin' in through th' bars. "You sure ain't forgotten this quick?"

"What did we do?" I asts him, sizzlin' down about a quart in one gulp.

"What didn't ye do? Pers'nally ye did up three of us while we was puttin' you in th' cooler here. Ye came home singin' in a car-*ermatter* 'bout 3 A. M., an' Terry wanted to bring th' *cochero* in an' kneel him in front of th' flagpole an' cut his head off. You was tryin' to borry a bay'net f'r th' ceremony. But I guess you'll get to rememberin' most all you did, and some more, before th' Old Man gets through with you. He's had a squad of cops *and* an orderly fr'm headquarters to call on him a'ready this mornin'. Fr'm what they said, I should judge you tried to bust up the little old Civil Gov'ment and clean up the L. B. B. Don't be bashful about th' water," he says. "It's all f'r you."

While I was sloshin' ice-water over my

head, Terry woke up. We sat on the edges of our bunks and talked it all over. We didn't feel real affectionate. We was still talkin', sort of aimless but effective, when the guard came an' took us out to the orderly-room and lined us up in front of th' Old Man.

"H'm," he says, swingin' back in his chair. "Do ye desire to call any witnesses to prove ye didn't do it?"

"No, sir," we both says quick. We'd known him f'r some time.

"H'm. That's lucky f'r you," he says. "I don't mind havin' men try to run my guard at three in th' mornin'," he says, talkin' to the ceilin' like an old friend, "nor tryin' to murder a coachman on my p'rade-ground, nor blackin' th' eye of th' sergeant of th' guard. H'm. Ye've got to expect them little things fr'm real soldiers, of course," he says. "H'm. But when I have to drive away six policemen before breakfast who've come to arrest two of my men f'r assaultin' several hundred natives all to onct, I've got to draw th' line. There's eddy-toryals about them men in all th' native papers this mornin', or so I am informed accordin' to th' best of my ability, *and* in th' *Cable-News*. A brutal attack on peace-

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able, well-disposed Fillypeeners, and on hundreds of th'm at that, is an assault to the foundations of gover'ment which I can't overlook. H'm."

"She spit on th' flag, sir," says Terry.

"Th' Colonel wanted them men for a G. C. M. this mornin'," says the Old Man, "to say nothin' of what th' civil authorities want th'm for, and that's a whole lot. But there ain't been a gen'ral pris'ner out of this comp'ny for five year now, and I persuaded the Commandin' Officer that I could attend to th' case. H'm. What do you think about that, Casey?"

"Yessir," I says.

"H'm. And Clancy?"

"Yessir," Terry says.

"H'm," says he, "y'r confidence in me is flatterin'. I'll try not to disappoint ye," he says, and gets up an' goes limpin' round th' room on his Tientsin leg. He walks around there f'r five minutes, anyway, before he says a word. Fin'lly he stops and looks out of the window. "A very pretty p'rade-ground we have here, Mr. Boyd," he says to the Lieutenant.

"Very pretty, sir," says the Lieutenant,

puzzled to know what the Old Man would be carin' about parade-grounds just then.

He hadn't served with him as long as me and Clancy had. You remember how the old barracks is built, in a hollow square round a p'rade big enough f'r a regimental corral, with th' post flagstaff stickin' up in th' middle, and lookin' about three hundred foot high?

"H'm," says th' Captain, gazin' out of his window. "Very pretty, indeed. But do you notice how the grass is growin' up between th' flagstones in the paths? That's not neat, Mr. Boyd. That's not fittin' in a place where the shadder of th' Flag must fall," he says, glancin' at us. "H'm. They tell me you're becomin' somethin' of a patriot, Clancy?"

"Yessir," says Terry.

"H'm. And Casey?"

"Yessir," I says.

"That's fine," says th' Old Man. "That's a pleasant surprise. H'm. But I hear ye have been wastin' y'r patriotism in wild firin'," he says. "It's too vallyouble to waste, 'specially in Maniller. I must try to help you make it flow in a gentle, steady stream. H'm. If you let it fly in chunks, it closely resimbles an-nichy," he says, "'specially in Maniller. H'm.

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Sentry, march these men to the p'rade and see that they pluck the grass, all the grass, between the stones, tie it in bundles of fifty stalks, neat bundles, and place the bundles at the foot of the post flagstaff. H'm. And, Sentry, see that after depositin' each bundle, they retire twelve paces and salute their flag before resum'in' work. After you have cleaned th' p'rade," he says to us, "I trust I shall be able to find some other work for you. If ye either of you feel y'r patriotism flaggin' under th' strain, just tell th' sentry and he will bring you in to me and I will try to revive it. H'm. You understand, Sentry?"

"Yessir," says th' sentry. His mouth was twistin' up on him, an' th' Lieutenant's, an' everybody's, but just us and the Old Man's. He looks sort of surprised.

"Is they any jokes around here I ain't noticed?" he says. "I do love a joke. H'm. You seen any, Clancy?"

"Nossir," says Terry, pretty sick.

The sentry grinned all th' time he was marchin' us out, an' the news spread quick, and they was grins to meet us all the way. An' then th' sentry begins to guy us.

"You've skipped a stalk on y'r left flank,

Clancy," he says. "I shall have to report it. And tie th'm in neat bundles of twelve stalks, is the orders, retire fifty paces, and salute th' flag."

"Cut it out, Skinny," says Terry. "He said bundles of fifty. I heard him m'self."

"Bundles o' hell an' fifty paces," says Skinny. "You can go an' ast *him* if ye won't believe *me*. Wouldn't ye like, perhaps, to go an' ast him? I'll march ye in with pleasure."

"Have y'r laugh while ye've got a place f'r it," says Terry. "I'll make y'r face over for ye, ye hyeener, when I get a chanst."

"Intimidatin' a sentry," says Skinny, but he shut up, far as talk went. On'y he made a bugle of his nose, an' begun to hum little tunes through it, and then th' crowd begun driftin' out on th' verandahs and caught on, and all you could hear was that whole damn parrot-faced battalion blowin' through their noses, Umpty - dee - he - hee - *heee* - he - he - *hee* - hum-hum-hum!

Terry and me said nothin' and picked busy f'r a while, but about th' hundre'th bundle th' hot stones and th' sun an' yesterday's beer an' th' crowd loafin' in th' cool verandahs an' ev'rything else all took holt of me to onct.

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"You're an ornament to th' Service," I says, tryin' to crawl into th' shadder of the pole. 'Twas about a mile long and an inch wide.

"Stow y'r face," says Terry, tyin' a bundle with a thumb big as three of it.

"I'd enjoy tellin' you what I think of you," I says, "on'y I can't think of it all to onct. How's y'r patriotism ripplin' now?" I says. "Looka th' Flag, th' dear old Flag, floatin' up above y'r crazy head."

Terry swallows hard. "Casey," he says, "I may uv let ye in f'r this, but —" He picks up his little bundle and carries it over to th' foot of th' pole. Then he falls back and salutes. Then he comes over to me, an' his face was blossomin' into a grin! Yessir, there was a hole in them rugged features of his you could've shoved a blanket-roll into. "Oh, Casey," he says, "Casey, man, if th' Old Boy soaks it to us this way f'r what *we* done, wouldn't ye, oh, wouldn't ye just like to see what he'd a done to that theayter, if he was runnin' this little old town?"

An' thinkin' of that, I grinned too.

CHAPTER V

THE SUPERFALOUS MAN

I CAME back, but I am not certain that I had ever left the old temple of Tzin Piaôu. I roused, then, but I am not sure that I had been asleep. However it may have been, I was conscious of being there in the temple of Tzin Piaôu for a moment, long enough to observe that my old heathen priest, half reclining on his slab, was thoughtfully fingering a hard lump in his girdle, just over the pit of his stomach.

But the moment he saw me looking at him, he made an imperative little gesture, and —

“Tell th’ Professor that other one, Casey,” a husky voice commanded. “*You* know. Th’ day we lost th’ friend o’ Sly’s.”

Thereupon the even, drawling, dryly humorous voice began to speak. This is what it said this time:

“An’ then Terry says, ‘You’re too skinny to fight, an’ you ain’t big enough to kill, an’

I wouldn't feel much lonesome if you was somewheres else. You're what *I* call superfalous.' " The voice dwelt on the magnificent polysyllable lovingly. " An' th' mayreen hobo, he lays his head down on th' table an' weeps some weeps into his glass. It was empty. It always was. ' That's th' wye it gaos with me,' he says. ' I can't never myke no friends. F'r twenty year I've been sylin' th' seas fr'm the North Paole to th' South, fr'm th' East Paole to th' West, chysin meridiiums fr'm wyve to wyve, lookin' f'r a friend. But ev'rywhere I gaos — '

" ' Hell,' says Terry, ' if you feel that bad about it, we'll have one more. Casey,' he says to me, ' is they an East Pole? It *sounds* reas'nable, some way.' An' then," the voice mused blissfully, " we had th' tamarin' cock-tails, an' then we went to ride with the accidental caraboo. That *was* a batty day."

" Ain't I never told you about that day?" Suddenly the voice was coy. " Oh, I don't dast to tell," it murmured. " Local 23 o' th' Christian Temp'rance Union'll be gettin' after me f'r makin' it look like th' Army still *drunk*. I don't want to spread no false impressions. Ev'rybody knows that since th' vile canteen

was took away, an' we was give a real chance to lead th' sinful life, there ain't one soldier in ten would even pass a saloon, willin'ly. No, sir," the voice remarked thoughtfully, "I don't reckon there's more'n one in twenty in th' whole Army would let a s'loon get by him, if he had to walk a mile out of his road.

"Who this superfalous man was," said the voice, "*I* don' know. An' where *we* was, I've been tryin' to find out ever since. We started in on beer, but we switched to th' tamarin' cocktails, an' we ended in th' Lord knows what. Don't you never drink a tamarin' cocktail, 'nless you want Local 23 startin' a grand guard patrol across your trail.

"That day begun," the voice continued, "with a terrible painful talk me an' Terry had with th' Old Man. It was th' summer we laid in Maniller after th' Samar campaign, an' me an' Terry an' the Irishman named Schleimacher had that patriotic go with th' gu-gu theayter. That coincident shook the Old Man's faith in us way down to th' roots, an' f'r weeks afterwards he kep' us doin' double guard an' double kitchen police an' stunts like that till we was all wore out. So this mornin'

we bucks up an' tells him we needs some more passes an' a day off.

" 'H'm,' says the Old Man. 'If I done my duty by sersiety, you two'd never get out together, less'n one was in a submarine an' th' other in a b'loon, and then I'll bet,' he says, 'you'd manage to get your trails tangled someways. H'm. Who am I to butt into the stars in their courses and get a sore head? I can't keep ye in quarters no longer; y'r luck at poker is causin' too many hard feelin's. An' I don't dass to let ye out sep'rate, f'r each of ye needs th' other one to bring him home. H'm.' He gives us th' passes an' then, just when we thought we was saved at last, he calls us back. 'How much money have ye got, anyway?' he asts.

"We hates to name th' size. Th' cards *had* run favorable since last pay-day.

" 'That had ought to keep ye in fines f'r quite a spell,' he says, when we told him. 'H'm. Give it here. I'll help ye save it.'

"We hands over, an' he peels two skinny little bills off them nice fat rolls. 'I'll let ye have five apiece,' he says. 'That makes three dollars f'r chow, an' a dollar to hire carrer-matters, an' ten beers apiece. Ten is all ye

need. Y'r stummicks is only supposed to hold a pint and a half, anyhow,' he says. 'I'll send th' rest of th' money over to the Adjutant's safe, where you can get at it handy after summary court to-morrer. H'm.'

"Poor as we was, we'd a been glad to get away, but he stops us again. 'Won't ye be good this once?' he says. 'I can't make it out,' he says, sad-like, to th' ceilin'. 'Here's Maniller layin' open before them, with nice long walks stretchin' out all around her. All kinds of nice long hot walks beckonin' them out among th' rice-paddies. An' th' Luneta, where they could set and look at th' ships when they was tired, and kill muskeeters. An' th' Y. M. C. A. readin'-room. An' th' Lib'ry. H'm. Yet I'm mor'lly certain they'll pass all them things by on the off side, an' fetch up in some low groggery, debauchin' young Engineers and Marines an' shatterin' th' Gover'-ment. Why can't my oldest soldiers ack decent?' he says, 'sos't I can take some *pride* in th'm?'

"'May I ex-plain to th' Captain, sir?' asts Terry. 'That theayter *biznai* was an axcident.'

"'An axcident!' says the Old Man. 'H'm.

If you see any axxidents comin' along to-day, give them the road. They'll get into just one more axxident,' he says to th' ceilin', 'an' they'll break my heart an' *then*,' he says, 'there'll be something noticeable doin'. Something noticeable. H'm.'

"We seen that was no place for us, and we sneaks out like a pair of cats that had got caught in swimmin'. 'Did you see his eye?' I says, when we was safe outside. 'It's up to us to walk cracks to-day.'

"Terry just grunts, and the silence didn't really get broken till we'd beat it down Real and was settin' on a bench in th' Luneta. Terry spoke first. 'Any man that figures up *my* stummick,' he says, 'at a quart and a half, has got another guess.'

"'That's a handsome Chink cattle-boat out by the end of the breakwater,' I says. 'Ain't she got graceful lines?'

"'Why,' asts Terry, scuffin' away at the gravel under the bench, 'didn't he give us a nickel and ast f'r the change? Whose money is that, anyway?'

"'That transport's a picture,' I says. 'If she was on'y a little closer, we could almost see the stripes round her smoke-stack.'

“ ‘If,’ says Terry, ‘they was any way of makin’ those dollars *stretch*, I’d paint a first coat of blood-color all over Maniller, just to show him what I could do. But he got th’ bulge on us when he got th’ cash.’

“ ‘Get on to the ships,’ says I. ‘He’ll ast us how they was lookin’.’

“All to once Terry begins smoothin’ the gravel back with his toe. ‘Casey,’ he says, ‘they *will* stretch! This is the day we walk on our feet and save two dollars carrermatter money. It ain’t such a much, but — an’ then,’ he says, ‘they’s the chow money. I know a hash-fact’ry where we can get a plate of beans f’r a *peseta y media*, an’ beans is fillin’. Y’r stummick don’t hold but two quart and a half, anyhow, and you don’t want to overload it. Come on,’ he says, jumpin’ up. ‘Altogether there’s about seventy-seven beers got by the Old Man. Come on! We must have lost a lot of time.’

“ ‘As you were,’ I says. ‘If you take me f’r a low booze-fighter like yourself,’ I says, ‘you’re much mistaken; and besides,’ I says, ‘did ye ever hear the Old Man talk like he did this mornin’?’

“ ‘Onct,’ says Terry.

“ ‘An’ you know what you *got*,’ I says. ‘It’s up to you and me to roost high and pull up our feet, f’r if old Ma Trouble gets her claws into us this happy day, th’ Old Man is plannin’ to draw cards, too, and they’re a bad pair to buck. *Sabe?*’

“Terry seen I was right, an’ that’s the way we come to land down there on th’ water-front. Don’t ast me where it was. We walked through about six gates in th’ Walled City and come out on the river, an’ took a canoe and landed somewhere way down on the other side. That’s all I know. There was the place waitin’ for us. Café of the 400 Flags, it says in Spanish over the door, and underneath, in English, Sailor’s Friendly.

“And it was a nice friendly sort of place. We was the only ones there, and after we’d got sat down in a corner by a window, we figured we’d fooled old Ma Trouble f’r once. There warn’t anybody within a mile to lead us astray, an’ we just aimed to set there an’ look at th’ boats on th’ river till we’d had enough, and then go back to Barracks and surprise the Old Man, and make him ashamed of himself. But it warn’t to be.

“We hadn’t been settin’ there more’n half

an hour, when that A. O. H. sailorman Schleimacher from Cavite comes in the door, and th' sorrerful lad was right behind him. It was all off then, on'y we didn't know it.

" 'Ahoy, *amigos*,' says Schleimacher. ' Well, well, well, if it ain't the two pay-triots! Always sloppin' round in beer, ain't you? Don't go dilutin' your insides with that stuff. Here, you,' he yells to the Malay pirate behind the bar, ' fetch along th' thought-re-mover f'r th' Señors.'

" ' W'isky?' asts th' pirate.

" ' If that ain't like a Marine!' says Terry. ' But then *you* ain't got a canteen no more, either.'

" ' No, we ain't, *dankum Himmler*,' says Sly, an' th' sorrerful sailorman butts in, layin' his head down on th' table and cryin' like a child. ' Times ayn't what they ware,' he says. ' Men don't drink like they used. Mytes, I remember a dye in Punt' Arenas, off Tristan d'A-cunha —'

" ' Who's y'r friend, Sly?' I asts.

" ' Damfino,' says Sly. ' He picked me up at th' Navy landin'. Said my clo'es smelt so salt it made his mouth water. Some lime-juicer on th' beach, I reckon. No, sir,

dankum Himmle, there ain't no more canteen. When I think,' Sly says, 'of th' pay I've wasted aboard, f'r belly-wash, but *now*,' he says, 'you don't hit th' beach on'y after pay-days, an' then you've got th' money, an' you've got the *thirst*, an' Mine Gott!' he says, 'the load you can get on! No canteens in mine. Fill th'm up. They's one f'r you, Barnacles, if you can keep the tear-drops out of it.'

"The guy sat up straight enough, soon as a drink was mentioned, and we got a good look at him. Talk about y'r hoboes! That mayreener looked like he'd been trampin' it way down on th' bottom, and hadn't got around to shakin' himself and combin' the shells and seaweed out of his hair.

" 'Well,' says Terry, when he'd took him in, 'he sure does look superfalous to me.'

"The guy mops up his drink, an' lays his head down on th' table again. 'That's th' wye it gaos,' he blatters. 'I can't never myke no friends, and so I gao chysin' meridiums over the angry wyves. I 'ad a friend onct, to Valparaiso, as smart a 'and as ever reefed a stuns'l — ' he chokes up so bad he can't talk.

" 'Good Lord, Sly,' says Terry, 'have we got to set around with that all day?'

“ ‘Chuck him overboard if you want,’ says Sly. ‘He ain’t mine. But let him stay, and I’ll pay for his. I like a crowd around to kind of keep them movin’.’

“ ‘I ’ad a shipmyte onct off Comorin,’ bleats th’ sorrerful lad, ‘but ’e was lost, step-pin’ of th’ bowsprit’ — he chokes up.

“ ‘Oh, well,’ says Terry, ‘if you feel that bad about losin’ him, we’ll have one more. We’ll all pay f’r his rounds, Sly, if he’s broke. On’y, he does look superfalous to me.’

“I reckon that wanderer must have felt near as bad as he looked! Seemed like he’d been pretty near everywhere once or twice, an’ ev’ry place he remembered, something about it made him cry. We got ust to him after a while, and he just sat with his head among th’ glasses, ’ceptin’ when a drink come by.

“Long about noon we got to wonderin’ what we’d better drink next. Th’ thought-remover warn’t workin’ to suit Sly. ‘Th’ ferry goes at six,’ he says, ‘an’ I ain’t even got a start yet. Le’s try an’ find somethin’ certain.’ Then th’ weeper looks up.

“ ‘I can’t ’ope to myke no friends,’ he says, eyein’ us mournful, ‘but I *can* myke a tamarin’

cocktail. A little lydy down to Macassar learnt me. Mytes, w'en I think of that pore young girl an' the 'orrible wye I lost 'er — ' it took two thought-removers to get him sos't he could tell th' pirate what bottles to bring f'r th' cocktail. They made a bunch. Th' sorrerful lad most looked happy when he saw them.

“ ‘They ayn’t no tamarin’s,’ he says, ‘but *that* don’t myke no differunce. Mytes, you’d ought to see th’ tamarin’s at Isle o’ France! W’en I think I’ll never see no tamarin’s like them no more — ’ On’y th’ bottles saved him. He took a swig out of the first one he touched. Right there th’ Sorrers o’ Satan lad begun to look fishy to me. Didn’t seem like anybody’d need quite so many drinks to drown anything but a thirst. But I forgot all that when he gave me th’ cocktail.

“ ‘Stead of a kick it had a kind of a pull to it, that drink did, like a b’loon. ‘Two more of them,’ says Sly, settin’ down his glass, ‘an’ th’ Cavite ferry can go when it very well pleases. *I* can walk.’

“ ‘If so be I *’ad* a friend,’ says th’ mayreener, sort of proud at th’ way we lapped them up, ‘they’s nothin’ I’d love better’n to

set all dye long mykin' tamarin' cocktails for 'im.' I reckon that was no lie. 'Mytes,' says he, 'w'en I think I'll never 'ave no real friend to myke th'm for —'

" 'Brace up, Bo,' says Terry, like a father. Th' tamarin's had took holt that quick. 'Brace up, old sport. We're all friends o' your'n here. Ain't that so, boys?'

" 'Is it, mytes?' says th' mayreener. 'Is it? Well, well, I never thought to 'ave *three* friends all to onct! W'en I think of all the 'undreds of shipmytes — I'll be mykin' up another, mytes.'

" So Barnacles, he got started makin' th'm, an' we got started drinkin' th'm. So did he. I never seen a drink ack like them. Didn't seem to have no real effect, but things just moved away back where they belonged an' let you alone. And sympathetic! Say, if we could on'y manage to throw a few of them into Local 23, we'd get th' canteen back. They sure are a funny drink. 'Bout th' sixth, we couldn't do enough f'r that stranded mayreener. I'd forgot all about his seemin' fishy, and me an' Terry an' Sly hung round him like a bunch of old-maid aunts, givin' him drinks ev'ry time he remembered anything.

He sure had a great mem'ry. 'Twarn't till th' middle of the afternoon it begun to show signs of givin' out. An' then he thinks he wants to have a look at Maniller — sos't he could remember *that*, I reckon.

"His legs wouldn't quite hold him. 'Mytes,' he says, 'me knees ayn't what they ware. W'en I remember them trips to Kerguelen's Land, down round San Fernando Fo — in them dyes no smarter 'and rove a dead-eye or 'auled a keel. But now —'

"'Give him an arm, Casey,' says Terry. 'Can't you *see* he ain't as young as us? Brace up, old sport, we'll look out f'r *you*.'

"So th' three of us steers th' sorrerful sailorman out onto th' *muelle*, an' there warn't a livin' soul on th' whole river front but just the accidental caraboo! *He* was standin' hitched to a cart, right where old Ma had left him.

"Th' mayreener breaks down when he sees that caraboo. 'A buffalao!' he blatters. 'I ayn't seen one of them since I was a gye young sheperd — fisherman, on me father's little farm in th' valleys — beaches o' Bengal! Mytes, lead me to th' buffalao.'

"'That ain't a buffalo, sport,' says Terry.

'Buffalos has hair. That's a caraboo, an' you don't want no part of him. They ain't safe.'

" 'E'll not 'urt me,' says th' mayreener. 'Aoh, th' buffalaos I've fed and watered with these 'ands in th' dear old dyes. Lead me to 'im, mytes.'

" We steers him over and he falls on that caraboo's neck and cries into his ear and blubbers some kind of talk to him: an' th' caraboo wriggles his ear an' waggles his little tail an' blubbers back. Them two understood each other! It knocked me flat. All my respec' f'r th' mayreener comes back.

" 'Ay, mytes,' he bleats, 'it mykes me young again to talk with 'im. Put us up on th' cart, mytes.'

" 'Ye can't drive him, sport?' says Terry, doubtful.

" 'F'r years I done nothink else,' says th' mayreener. 'Aoh, the old, 'appy dyes! Put us up, mytes, an' pass us th' nose rope.'

" 'If th' caraboo kills him,' says Terry, 'it'll on'y put th' pore old feller out of his mis'ry.' So we hists him up an' gives him th' nose rope, and there he set cross-legged like a nigger, jerkin' th' rope an' talkin' caraboo-talk, an' th' caraboo goes! Yes, sir, th'

mayreener drives him up an' down like he'd been born there! I never seen no other white man that could do that.

" 'Come aboard, mytes,' he says, pullin' up. 'We'll tyke a little turn about th' taown.'

" Seems like I heard old Ma Trouble scratchin' herself somewheres. 'You go along an' help Ma, Terry,' I says, 'an' I'll report the axcident to th' Old Man. When it comes to takin' a ride with a stolen caraboo an' a hayseed mayreener fr'm th' beaches of Bengal —'

" 'I knowed I couldn't 'ope to 'ave *three* friends,' says th' mayreener, doublin' up an' cryin' like a child. It didn't touch my heart, not hard, but Terry an' Sly was still full of tamarindy feelin's. 'Don't spoil th' pore old feller's fun,' they says. 'We'll bring th' caraboo back, so it ain't as if we stole him. He's just borrered.'

" So I clumb on and we starts, th' mayreener settin' an' jerkin' th' rope, and us hangin' our legs off th' back of th' wagon. And by th' time we'd gone a ways, I begin to like it! It was somethin' new, an' then I reckon perhaps th' joltin' freshened up my tamarin's some. Anyhow, th' houses moved

back and made room, an' th' people on th' sidewalks, givin' us a glad hand an' a merry ha-ha, sounded far-away an' soothin', and when we'd got up to Binondò bridge it seemed so natchral I wasn't even wonderin' any more why a copper didn't pinch us. I don't *sabe* that yet, but I reckon old Ma kep' them off till she got done with us.

"Yes, sir, that ride went fine, till we come to th' foot of the Escolta. You know what it's like at that time of day? Jam full! A line of rigs was standin' along each side of that narrer little old street, and inside of them two more lines was pokin' along, opposite ways, and in what was left of th' middle th' horse-cars was doin' rapid transit. Didn't look like you could crowd a thin dog through that mess.

" 'Here's where we turn round, sport,' says Terry, but it was no use. Th' mayreener whispers some messages down th' rope an' th' caraboo swings into th' car-tracks, and next minute there we was plowin' a road up the Escolta, and no way of backin' out till we hit the other end, half a mile away. I never felt so conspectuous in my life! Ev'rybody was lookin'. 'Tain't often they see three soldiers

caraboo-drivin' up the Escolta, with old man McGinty at th' rope!

"We might have made it, I still think, if th' mayreener had stuck to th' job. He sure *sabed* caraboo. But he lays down on us. Yes, sir, right there he just curls up and goes sound asleep! 'My watch below, mytes,' he says. 'Relieve th' w'eel,' an' he topples over. Sly grabs th' rope.

"And away we went! Seems like th' caraboo knowed something green had took holt. He puts his nose down an' whoofs an' swings his head. First wipe th' tip of a horn catches a chicken-coop wagon, an' R-r-rip!—th' spokes is out of a wheel. He swings th' other way an' takes a piece of varnish, with th' wood still on it, of a shiny new victorier. Sly gets mad at that!

"'Clear out of th' fairway, ye blinkety-blanked-blicked-zinked longshoreman,' he yells, hittin' th' caraboo a crack with the end of th' rope. Th' caraboo breaks into a gallop, swingin' them horns like a scythe, and ev'ry jump Sly hands him another. 'Stand by to repel boarders,' he sings out. 'Hit th' victorier guy in th' eye if he sets a foot on deck. Wheee-ee-e! Luff up, ahead there, you're off

your course! Luff up! Well, *take* it, then.' Zing! Bing! One of our wheels — they was sawed solid off a log four foot through — hits a carrermatter an' tosses it onto another, and them two piles up some more. 'Whee-ee-ee!' Sly yells. 'Hold her as she is! Didn't carry away nothin' that trip, did we? Whee-ee-eee!'

"He lights in with th' rope and away we goes again, two ton of caraboo and two ton of wagon, both built low, at a dead gallop! Rigs was pilin' up all around us, an' horses was kickin' an' squealin', an' wheels was lockin' up an' rippin' out spokes, an' *cocheros* was cussin' in ten languages. Away back I seen a mounted cop chasin' us, but Ma had him headed off in that mess.

"And then She sets her claws in! Right ahead of us a carrermatter was streakin' it hell-bent through an open space, tryin' to get away. We could see th' feller in it leanin' forrard and whalin' th' horse. But, Lord, that caraboo'd a run down a thoroughbred.

"'Sheer off to starboard!' Sly yells. 'What do ye *mean*, loafin' round th' channel that way, ye blinkety-bling-blanked son of a mess attendant? I report ye to th' Captain

of th' Port. To starboard, I tell ye. Port your helm! Hard over! Oh, well,' he says, 'if you *want* it — Collision bulkheads, boys, I'll have to ram him. Hold hard, all! Whee-eee-eeee!' He hits th' caraboo a couple more, and it seems like we go right through that carrermatter. It just fades away. 'Take that!' yells Sly. 'An' I'll report ye, besides.'

"An' right then, risin' up out of what had been th' carrermatter, I seen a short chunky kind of a man, with a tire hung to one ear, and a handful of spokes stickin' out of one pocket, and a piece of dashboard in one hand. I didn't see him long, but I seen him awful plain. It was *Him!* 'Looka there!' I whispers — I couldn't talk — an' Terry takes one look, an' *he* couldn't talk.

"An' then th' Old Man catches sight of us, an' he stands up in th' ruins and shakes th' piece of dashboard at us. 'H'm!' he says. 'H'm-mmm!' That's all. *He* couldn't talk, neither.

"Right there a street turns off the Escolta, an' I seen it was then or never. 'Sly,' I says, 'can ye turn off here to th' lef'?'

"'Sure,' he says. 'Anywheres. He's steerin' fine now. Whoop-eee-eeee-ee!' Zing!

Bing! Sly leans back on th' rope, an' th' caraboo puts his nose down, an' Whoof! — he hits that line of rigs between us an' th' road we needed. Talk about football. Two bumps and a hard swaller, an' we was gallopin' down that side street, with th' racket dyin' away behind us.

“ ‘Keep him goin’, Sly,’ I says. ‘’Twas th’ Old Man we hit!’

“ ‘Mine Gott!’ says Sly, and lights in with th’ rope. Th’ caraboo tries to fly, but that didn’t bother us. We wouldn’t a cared if he had. We just hangs on and lets him go it.

“ ‘When he did stop it was in front of a s’loon! Funny coincident, warn’t it? We seen there was just one thing to do, an’ th’ mayreener thinks so, too. He slep’ through all that, but th’ minute we was sneakin’ up quiet on a drink he comes to life!

“ ‘As anythink ’appened, mytes?’ he asts. We tells him.

“ ‘Aoh,’ he says, ‘I do ’ope ye ’aven’t ’urt me buffalao! They’re dillikit creachures, mytes. In the old, ’appy dyes — ’ he has to cry in th’ caraboo’s ear before he can take his drink.

“ ‘Don’t ast me how we spent th’ rest of the

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afternoon. Ast th' caraboo; he was boss. We couldn't steer him none to speak of, but we could start him goin'. He stopped himself. Always in front of a s'loon, too. I'd like to see th' guy that owned him.

"An' ev'ry time he stopped, th' mayreener would wake up an' mix a tamarin' cocktail an' have a weep. His mem'ry was workin' fine again. An' so we follered th' trail of that intemp'rate caraboo through all th' back streets of Maniller, wanderin' on fr'm one low haunt of vice to another till the houses moved back where they belonged again, an' th' sun got nice and hot and shiny, and even th' Old Man didn't seem to matter — much — an' we went to sleep on th' cart, still wanderin'.

"When I woke up, Sly was gone, but Terry and th' mayreener was still poundin' their ears, and th' caraboo was still walkin', quiet, like he was loafin' home with his dinner-pail and pipe after a hard day's work, along a road between some rice-paddies. Things looked new to me and I set up and took a look. We was lost! Th' sun was settin' 'way over across th' paddies, and there warn't no Maniller in sight, nor nothin' but just th' paddies and th' road — and us. And I warn't sure whether it

was yestidday or to-morrer! I felt so lonesome I woke Terry up.

"We set lookin' round a spell, and things begun to come back to us. 'Old Ma cert'nly *hooked* th'm in this time,' I says. 'Th' Old Man's heart is broke now, all right. Did ye spot th' look in his eye when he reco'nized us? That spelt G. C. M. to me.'

"'Th' carrermatter was just an axxi—' Terry stops short. 'I donno,' he says, 'but what it would be safer to desert.'

"'Maybe we've deserted a'ready,' I says. 'Lord knows how long we've overstayed our leave. I feel like I'd slep' a month.'

"'I've got a head, too,' says Terry. 'It was them tamarin' cocktails done it. Swelp me if I ever drink another drink.'

"That hits th' mayreener. 'Lead me to it, mytes,' he says, sleepy. 'Me legs ayn't what they ware, but lead me to it.'

"'That's what done it,' I says to Terry.

"Terry looks at th' mayreener a spell. 'Casey,' he says, 'you're right. He done it, th' shrimp. It was him invented th' tamarin's, and *him* st—borrered th' caraboo, and *him* went to sleep on the Escolta. And *us* aimin' to ack decent, an' gettin' th' Old Man

to save our money for us. Th' cock-eyed old cod-fish!' says Terry, eyein' th' slumberin' mayreener. 'I'd like to bat his head off. Swelp me if ever I drink another —'

" 'Mytes,' th' mayreener begins, but Terry claps a hand over his mouth. 'What'll we do to him, Casey?' he says.

" 'Le's think,' I says.

" Th' caraboo was still loafin' along with his pick and shovel over his shoulder, and we sets and looks at him, and th' mayreener, and th' paddies, thinkin'. It was gettin' pretty near dark, and 'way ahead of us was some mountains th' caraboo looked to be makin' for. Then th' plan come to us.

" 'Give us th' rope, Casey,' Terry says. 'He might roll off 'n muddy his cloes.' They was a coil of pack-rope on th' cart, and we takes and rolls th' mayreener all up in it and fastens him to th' cart, all safe *and* sound. He never yips till we're settin' th' last knot. 'Three friends,' he says. 'Mytes, I never thought to 'ave —'

" 'Friends!' says Terry. '*Friends!* Ain't he got a nerve!'

" We drops off behind and leaves him and his buffalao to jog along. It was gettin' dark,

but we set down and watched them out of sight. They was passin' out of our lives slow but sure, joggin' along, him and his buffalao.

" 'There may be ladrones in them mountains,' I says.

" 'Ladrones,' says Terry, 'wouldn't bother *him*. He's too superfalous f'r ladrones.'

" It got darker and darker, and pretty soon old Mr. Caraboo grunts up over a little rise and they was gone. 'Well,' says Terry, 'if he ever does get back, he'll have somethin' *real* to remember this time. Come along, Casey.'

" So we hits th' road. We reckoned if we follered it long enough, we prob'ly strike some place. So we plugs along through th' dark. We warn't worryin' none about Schleimacher. Nothin' ever happens to a full-blooded Marine, anyhow, and we had other things to think about.

" 'Did ye notice th' tire round his neck?' I says. 'That tire'll cost us a mont' extry.'

" Terry grunts. 'Considerin' th' months we'll get anyhow,' he says, disgusted-like, 'an extry one is what *I'd* call superfalous.'

" And so," the voice concluded thoughtfully, "we plugs along."

CHAPTER VI

THE VALLEY OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

THE voice died away and it was still, with a breathless silence which made the beating of my heart ring in my ears. It was as though I stood outside the world, in the Empty Places. And then slowly consciousness returned, if I had been unconscious, and I opened my eyes and found that I was no longer in that old temple of Tzin Piaôu. I was glad of that. I had grown weary and half afraid of seeing that old man who lay there on his slab of stone, looking, looking, looking into vacancy, watching the strivings and disasters and the grimy ludicrousness of his fellows, while a little flame of derisive laughter danced and flickered in his eyes. He seemed to me in truth a heathen man.

Now I lay in a spacious, dusky chamber, on a wide divan cushioned with softest stuff, and above me, suspended from the lofty ceiling by curiously wrought chains of silver and swaying slowly, silver lamps burned very

dimly, and the swaying light and shadow of them moved on the age-blackened teak-wood of the floor and the mellowed silken tapestries with which the walls were hung. The air was sweet, and very heavy, with the fumes of burning incense, and it was vibrant with the rise and fall of many distant voices, as if they spoke softly, or prayed, perhaps, in unison.

In my wonderment, I stirred a little on my couch, and from a dusky corner of the chamber a woman came swiftly forward and stood before me, — such a woman as I had never thought to behold. If every perfection of every perfect beauty men have famed could have been stolen to deck one woman only, and have been blended cunningly together by a master hand and made instinct with life, that might have been the birth of her I looked on then.

A thin gold circlet glinted dully in the darkness of her hair, and she was robed in a single garment of some thin, clinging, gauzy, precious stuff which revealed the more fully her womanly perfections, the while it pretended to conceal them. She walked swiftly and lightly, with lithe hips swaying in the way of Eastern women, and her rosy feet twinkled

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in the swaying yellow lamplight; she came and stood before me and looked down with serious, starry eyes.

"Where am I?" I asked. "And who are you? A Heathen Goddess?"

She laughed softly. "You are in the temple of Lal," she said, "and I am a priestess of Lal."

"Why am I here?" I asked.

"I do not know," she said, "but you were sent, I think, to see."

"What," I asked, "is that murmur of voices, as if many prayed together?"

"They are praying," she said. "Look and see!"

She drew aside a fold of the tapestry, and I looked into the cavern of a temple. Around a lofty, mystic figure other swaying lamps of silver burned, and other priestesses in shining, gauzy robes held offerings aloft. And all the vast floor of the temple was one heaving sea of the women of the East, who knelt, and held their hands on high, imploringly, and laid their foreheads on the flagstones. And as they knelt they prayed, and the soft ripple of their voices made all the arches of the temple murmur.

"What do they pray for," I asked, "so many of them together?"

"For fruitfulness," said the priestess of Lal softly. "For fruitful love. They know that if a woman has that, she has all that the world can give her. So they pray for it."

"That," said I, "is the fate of women. The bitter fate, for when their love must prove unfruitful —"

"It is still love," said the priestess of Lal softly, "and sweeter than all else in life."

In the dimness behind me, I thought I heard the echo of a chuckle of cynical laughter, but I did not heed it. "Yes," I said, "any love that's true is sweeter than all else —"

"Sweeter than life itself," murmured the priestess of Lal, and started, half afraid. For louder, more unmistakable, sounded that mocking chuckle.

But I did not heed it. Her words had stirred old memories in me, and once again I was wandering in the sun-flooded length and breadth of a Valley of Sunshine and Shadow intermingled.

Far up in the northern end of Luzon the cloud-hung cordillera divides to east and west

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before it sinks abruptly in the sea, enclosing the great central valley of the Cagayan. A dim, far-off region it has always been, of which the good folk of Manila spoke with vague words, as old men on the hills of Spain used to speak of Ultramar, that unknown somewhere into which their sons were forever disappearing. And even the people of the valley did not know it. At Aparri, on the coast, where in the old days bales of tobacco were piled like houses along the sandy streets while the shipping season lasted, the busy laborers would tell you that it all came from "up there," with a wide vague sweep of the hand toward the south. You took a canoe and went southward for days between gray forests where the parrots screamed and monkeys climbed lazily down the creepers to scoop up water in their tiny hands, and you found Tuguegarao, the little city, sleeping on the bluffs, perched high and safe above the river; and men still told you of the wonders to be seen "up there." And then, after lazy days and days, poling upward past endless fields of corn and tobacco, you came to Ilagan, and the clerks in the offices of the Compañía General spoke to you of great plantations to be

seen "up there." But at Ilagan most men wearied of the journey, and gave up their quest before they had gone half way.

They should have persisted, for the real "up there" is the wonderful place they dreamed of, a land of magnificent spaces, of great stretches of plain and rolling hills. In every little valley is a forest where deer and wild boars and buffalo hide. And all the reaches of the river and the clear tributary mountain streams, the *pinaucanauanes*, are covered with clouds of ducks. And everywhere is tobacco — in the fields and in the houses, and in the big, flat-bottomed boats, the *barangayanes*, on the river. There is a stretch of country where it seems the rich, deep, warm soil never tires of growing things — tobacco and corn and flowers and canes and grasses and bamboo — and men have called it "*La Flor de la Isabela*," the flower of the land of good Queen Ysabel. It is a very quiet region, but there is a charm in the broad fields, and the hot, sunny air, and the wild hunts over plain and hill, and the expeditions now and then in search of gold in the distant, purple mountains where the wild men live. The valley grows upon one till one forgets the hills of

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Spain and the people one knew, and even the nearer delights of Manila, and stays on "up there" till one passes from the world which already has, and is, forgotten.

Sometimes they emerged for a moment, even came down to "el Capital" for the Christmas festivities, — lean, bronzed, bearded men who wandered silent through the gay crowds. How should they speak when they knew nothing of all the gossip of Manila, — the ball his Excellency was giving, and Don Fulano's promotion, and the match between that young Diego de Tal and the General's daughter? But let two of them meet in a café, over the tiny glasses of cognac, and they could talk readily enough, though always in that quiet, self-retained way which men of the open have.

"Brr-r-gh, it's chilly here; it would not be like this in the valley!" — "No, they will be planting now. And the river must be rising; the young daredevils will be having great sport shooting the rapids at Alcala. Remember the whirlpool on the west bank?" — "*Do* I? Have you heard that Don Enrique will hold a great *fiesta* on Shrove Tuesday?" — "Well, he can afford it, with this crop. Don Enrique

has covered more thousands this year than you have hairs on your chin, *hombre*,"

Always the valley and the river and tobacco, and Don Enrique. For Don Enrique was their lord. The Company back in Barcelona and Madrid might own everything — the lean, silent, white men, and the brown, toiling thousands in the fields, and the boats on the river, and the great white fortresses of warehouses — but in the valley Don Enrique was Company and King. For him they toiled and died forgotten, from him they thankfully received their meagre wage, and when an order came signed in his heavy hand, "*Valdez y de las Vegas*," all men hurried to do his will. Any one would be proud to serve such a man. There was a Valdez with every great captain that ever sailed, and a Vegas keeps his hat on with the highest yet. And since this is a commercial age, and mere family renown can count for little in the balance against hard cash, each year brought Don Enrique one hundred thousand *pesos*, five hundred thousand *pesetas*, eight hundred thousand *reales*! *Mira, amigo*, you could buy your bread and sausage with that, eh? and have something left for a bit of a present for the wife?

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And then he was no make-believe ruler, this Don Enrique. He knew the valley, every day's journey of it, from lonely Cordón lying in the threatening shadows of the pass, to the latest change in the bar outside Aparri; knew the capacity of each warehouse to the last bale; knew the shifting channel of the river, and could foretell the treacherous floods. And he knew what each subordinate of his was doing. No one knew when to expect a visit from him, and there were few who did not dread being called to ride with him. Yet he would dismount at the end of a long day in the saddle with as much calm grace as though he were merely returning from a canter round the town.

For he was always calm and dignified and silent, as only a gentleman of Castile can be. Not taciturn or insolent, or overbearing, but merely closed in himself. He treated all men — all white men, of course I mean, for natives do not count — with quiet courtesy, and made neither enemies nor friends. Even the guests who shared the hospitality of the great house at Echague knew very little of their host.

It was a house, that place at Echague, built four-square and heavy as a fort, of great

blocks of sandstone, and back of it was a huge walled garden. Of course Don Enrique had other houses, three of them, at Ilagan and Aparri and Manila. But he was as much a man of the open as any of his world-searching forebears, and he loved far-off Echague better than all the rest. Here, when the shipping was over and the last *barangayan* lay loaded to the water's edge above the rapids at Alcala, waiting for the first gentle lift of the rains to carry her safe down to Aparri, Don Enrique would retire with a band of chosen companions to hunt and game hard and long. Few men were invited a second time, or wished to be, for with all his courtesy Don Enrique was an exacting host in the hunting season. Long before dawn, the hounds would be belling in the *patio*, the great tiled courtyard, and the sleepy guest, turning on his pillow for another nap, would hear a mighty splashing from the room of his host, and the vicious squeals of the fiery little stallions in the stables, and the clink of bits and stirrups and spears. And before the unhappy sportsman could quite fall asleep, there would come a peal of trumpets in the haunting reveille and boys pounding at each door: "Ready, Señor. Ready. Your

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coffee is ready." And so they were up and away in a mad rush over hill and valley in the gloom, anything but attractive to a man who had a decent regard for his neck.

And when they returned, Don Enrique would come riding at the head of the long line, grave and composed as ever, while the huntsmen were loaded down with a beautiful great buck or a boar, killed by a single thrust of which any matador in Madrid need not have been ashamed. Then, after the huge hunt breakfast, would come the welcome torpor of the siesta, and in the evening a mighty game, *malilla* or monte or billiards, for Don Enrique played as he worked and rode, with a carelessness of consequences not at all pleasant to a man with a decent regard for his purse.

So, one by one, the guests sailed away down the mysterious river, and left Don Enrique alone in the great house at Echague, to be master of all he surveyed. And there he moved about his lost world, and was capped and bowed down to, and had his courteous, imperious way, until I think he began to feel that he was really a very great man indeed. And perhaps he was, as great as any other.

But solitary grandeur has its drawbacks, even to as grave and great a man as Don Enrique; and as the summers came treading on each other's heels with their burden of endless days, Don Enrique, sipping his Rioja in solitary state in the great dining-room, where the sweetness of orange-blossoms stole in through the wide windows, began to dream dreams of a companion who should sit always with him of an evening across the big, gleaming table, or come close beside him and share his thoughts. No, Don Enrique was not thinking of a wife; he had had a wife, and "lost" her, as he told the world. But there was his "little girl," Mercedes, back in a great gray convent in Madrid. His little girl, he called her in the letters he sent back every month, for she lived in his memory as the shy little maid he had given to a sweet-voiced Mother Superior, so many years before. It was for her he had been working all these years and piling up these princely possessions, and a look of almost womanish tenderness would come over his proud, grave face when he thought of her. This thought of her had sustained him in all the loneliness, and he had always dreamed of her coming as the crown-

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ing touch to his life. "Sometime," said Don Enrique often to the lizards darting across the table in the evening, as lizards will, "sometime she shall come to us." And somehow sometime always lingered in the future.

But at last, one evening when the odor of the blossoms hung very heavy in the damp, still air, and the thunder was muttering in the pass far back of Santa Lucia, Don Enrique stopped his sipping to look very hard at the great-grandfather of all the lizards, a tremendous old fellow almost five inches long. And the lizard returned the stare with his bright, beady eyes.

"*Por Dios*, my big friend," said Don Enrique to the lizard, at last, "she shall come to us at once." And if you realize what a very great man Don Enrique was, you will understand that when he began to make companions of the lizards, even the biggest and most respectable of them, it was quite time that he sent for Doña Mercedes.

Letters came and went, and in the Christmas season Don Enrique found himself in Manila waiting for the good old *Ysla de Panay* to bring his little girl to him. Many longing hearts have followed those old ships of the

Spanish Mail in the days that are gone. For all this was long ago. Not long as you count, perhaps, but I have seen Doña Mercedes' eyes, and they told me that it happened long, long ago, when the world was very young indeed.

But the old ship did not bring Don Enrique his little girl, after all. I wish you might have seen the Doña Mercedes who did come. Your heart would have beaten as fast, I hope, as that of the spruce young lieutenant who almost let her fall as he was helping her into the launch, and retired quite as full of confusion and blushes and speechlessness as if he had never worn shoulder-straps and a smart small-sword, and been aide-de-camp to his Excellency the Gobernador-General. For Doña Mercedes was tall and slight, with all the stateliness of her house, and her head was poised like a queen's on her slender neck, and her little, high-arched feet seemed scarce to touch the deck. Yet it was not the proud lady who made the young lieutenant's hand unsteady — he lived and moved among proud ladies, — it was the eyes of the young girl. For Doña Mercedes still looked out on the world from the shelter of her convent window, with such a gentle, timid, inquiring smile in the depths of her great dark

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eyes that she was far more dangerous to the peace and happiness of his Majesty's forces than all the natives of the Philippines, with Cuba thrown in besides.

When Don Enrique saw the eyes of the stately lady who had come to him in place of his little girl, he was comforted, for so the little maid whom he gave to the Mother Superior had looked at him. And Tia Maria had good report to make.

"She is the best, dearest, kindest child in the world," said Tia Maria. "She is as good as the Virgin herself, and never has a fault. Only she will not keep her feet dry; and oh! Don Enrique, if you knew how I have to work to make her take care of her complexion —" I suppose old servants are the same all the world over.

So Don Enrique received his little girl, the very finest little girl in all the world, which is not surprising when you consider what a very great man her father was.

While the two were getting acquainted, as Don Enrique put it, he condescended to share Doña Mercedes with the little world of Manila. He gave a great ball, and his Excellency danced the old minuet with her, whereat the

beholders cried that the days of chivalry were come again. Doña Mercedes smiled a little, and blushed a little, and the stout, red-faced old soldier led her to his stout, jolly old wife with the remark: "My dear, when you are good enough to die, here is your successor, if —" and he dropped forty years and a dozen campaigns to make Mercedes a wonderful bow.

"Tush, old wives are good enough for such as you," said her Excellency bluntly. "Sit down here beside me, my dear, and tell me how you like Manila."

"It is very good to be with my father again," said Doña Mercedes simply, "and you are all so kind to me."

And then the young officers, who had been tugging at their fierce moustaches and settling their chins in their stocks, came tramping stiffly up and begging for the honor. So it went on for several weeks, till one day her Excellency called. "Valdez," said she, in her straightforward way, "are you going to marry your daughter or not?"

"That, madame," he replied, "depends on —"

"On whether you find any one good enough

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for her, eh?" said her Excellency. "And there is no one, is there?"

"Not one in the world," he replied gravely, but with the gleam of a smile. Most people smiled when that simple old lady was near. "Not one in the world, madame," said Don Enrique. "But marriage is not a necessity of life; my little girl and I will be happy together for a time, I hope."

"Love of the saints," cried her Excellency, "he is as young as his daughter! He thinks to keep the bees always from his honey. Look at their eyes; they are boy and girl together! God grant you may be successful, Valdez. She is a dear, sweet child. But take her away to your kingdom," she added. "Take an old woman's advice. They are busy bees, and gay uniforms are unsettling for little girls who are to love only their fathers. And, besides, I can't find an aide to do an errand for me while she's in town!"

So Doña Mercedes, having had only a sip of the life most people lead, passed from the lost world of the convent to the lost world of the valley, with her proud, dainty ways, and a friendly, inquiring smile in her eyes for every one she met. I suppose you and I can't under-

stand how Doña Mercedes felt; one must step directly from the convent to the world to do that. But of course her smile was friendly, for she had never known any one who was not a friend; and it was inquiring, for the world was all one great puzzle to her, and she was interested in the multitude of people she saw doing so many seemingly hard and disagreeable and useless things. Of bad things, of course, she knew nothing, except for some words in her prayers. So Doña Mercedes, young woman and little girl, looked into the world with frank, interested eyes.

And a very delightful place she found it. There was the great house, with its thick walls and heavily barred windows and big, cool, dark rooms. There was the garden, with the old familiar orange and lemon trees and tinkling fountains. There were strange, sweet, new trees as well, ylang-ylang and clove and cinnamon, and a hundred other cool, fragrant, snowy-blossomed things, and poincianas, and orchids, and great ferns, and palms. Best of all, trained up and about her windows, were real Spanish roses, big white and pink and red and yellow fellows. And at the far end of the garden was a wide-spreading old veteran

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of a mango, big as a small mountain, and in its shade a little summer-house for her, almost hidden in a tangle of roses. Here she used to sit through the day, embroidering or reading, or dozing. It might have seemed a dull life to you and me, but then we never knew the quiet of the convent, and the peace of it.

Besides, she looked forward always to the evening. You never knew that either, perhaps — the coolness and delight of the tropical evening coming after the long glare of the day, when through the windows steals a fresh damp air, heavy with the scent of flowers and moist earth, and one hears the strange cries of birds and insects, and sees the big, silent, fluttering bats and the fireflies that make a living fountain of every tree; and all these but passing shadows on the background of a dim, happy, sleepy world of darkness.

Most of all, Doña Mercedes was interested in the creatures who worked and played in this huge new world. First there was her father. The long evenings were never too long with him, for Don Enrique cast aside all the gravity and dignity and silence, and laughed and jested and talked and dreamed with his little girl, till the grandfather of all

the lizards became disgusted at the unseemly disturbance of the established order, and retired with an indignant flip of the tail, which nearly lost him that brittle member.

Then there was good, grumbling Tia Maria, who found it hard to adjust herself to new conditions. "How can one live in a country where there are no sidewalks?" Tia Maria mourned, "and where there are monkeys and bats — ur-gh-h — and scorpions and spiders — oogh-h! Spiders big as *that*, child!" cried Tia Maria, pushing out a sturdy foot from under her limp black skirts.

Then there were the servants, with their eternal cheery smiles and careless ways, who first revealed to Doña Mercedes that she inherited the family temper. And the women and the little brown babies in the town, and the dull men in the fields — Mercedes wondered if it was not very hot and unpleasant to work in the fields, and so smiled most kindly at them, till they forgot their sullenness and smiled back.

There were the treacherous river and the great clumsy boats, and the fierce-looking river-men with their knives and the bright handkerchiefs about their heads. And once

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she met some wild men in the streets — sturdy fellows with great muscles and long black hair, stiff and rough as the mane of a horse, dressed mostly, to her frightened gaze, in shields and spears and head-axes and knives. But when she smiled timidly, they responded with wide grins, and tried to sell her little silver pipes and copper betelnut-boxes.

So Doña Mercedes moved about, learning many things concerning life, even in that far-off valley. She was destined to learn the greatest thing of all there, but that came later. I've often wished I could have seen the stately, slender child-woman in those days, with her big, inquisitive eyes — seen her just as the Captain did, when he came tearing into town to see her and nearly ran over her.

It was characteristic of Captain Manuel to come that way, forty miles in four hours, when after two slow months the news of her arrival penetrated far into the mountains, where he was happily busy hunting outlaws. It was characteristic of him to gallop full tilt down on the lady he had come to see, before he knew she was there. And it was characteristic of him also to rein his horse back on its haunches with one tug, and sweep his hat off

with a gesture that would have done honor to Quixote himself, and insist on escorting the lady home, despite the uneasy grumbling of Tia Maria, and a sudden access of stateliness on Doña Mercedes' part.

Everything Captain Manuel did was characteristic, for he was a Catalan. And while no one can foretell what a Catalan may do, it is always safe to say that he will do what he pleases, and do it with all his might. And this gray-eyed, fair-haired boy with the frank, smiling face, had chosen to play at living, thus far. He was the commander of the Guardia Civil in all the southern valley, put in that unenviable post that puzzled bureaucrats might be saved from his unbounded energy. And he played with the bandits and outlaws and savages, purposely left them undisturbed that they might grow bold and troublesome, and then went out with a laugh and destroyed them, as you might a cage of rats. When the fighting was over, he would come back unwearied and amuse himself with wondrous speculations in tobacco, or stake his last *peso* on a stroke at billiards with Don Enrique. The most fascinating of all the playthings he had discovered in his brief life was something

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he was pleased to call love. He played at that with his usual wholeheartedness, till a score of girls up and down the valley were ever watching for the lithe figure on the wild black horse, and more than a score of men were breathing threats of vengeance. Whereat the Captain laughed boyishly, and invited the discontented to step out and settle it once for all with pistol or rifle or knife or spear or bolo or bare hands.

I'm sorry you couldn't have known Captain Manuel instead of merely hearing about him from me, for you may get the idea that he was a good-for-nothing young reprobate, whereas he was only a gay, good-hearted boy, dissipating his splendid strength in a hundred useless ways, just because no one had ever shown him a useful one. But he was a dangerous person, with his ready tongue and tossing hair, to come prancing before the wondering eyes of that bewildered woman-child, Doña Mercedes. Dangerous, I mean, to Don Enrique's dreams of the future. For of course he fell in love with Doña Mercedes at once. He was quite sure of that, before he had walked a dozen steps with the lady, that first night.

With him, to decide that he was in love was to be there; so behold the Captain, of a morning after drill, come clanking to the little summer-house, all brave in sword and spurs, to sit and regale Doña Mercedes with weird tales of the little fights, till terrified Tia Maria crossed herself and peered anxiously up into the branches of the great mango, more than half expecting to see a naked head-hunter there ready to leap upon her venerable wig.

And Doña Mercedes, poor, little, stately Mercedes, watched this strange newcomer as she watched all others, but with a shade more interest, for she felt that she understood him. The frank, friendly smile in his eyes seemed so exactly what she felt to all the world.

Soon she began to find his presence a welcome relief to the length of the days, and missed him when he did not come. Don Enrique should have taken care then. But Don Enrique was careless. In the first place, it was rather a strenuous undertaking to keep Captain Manuel away from where he chose to be. And in the second place, any fear that he could awaken the heart in Doña Mercedes was absurd. He was a penniless youngster, without a "de" or an "Y" or a "Don" to

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his name, and she was Doña Mercedes, a Valdez and a Vegas; and, furthermore, she had him, Don Enrique, to fill her every want. So Don Enrique smiled and jested and talked and dreamed of an evening in the great dining-room, and was very happy with his little girl. And Captain Manuel laughed and joked and sang in the little summer-house of a morning, and was in heaven, or thought he was, which, after all, amounts to just as much while it lasts. And Doña Mercedes looked on them all with friendly, inquiring eyes.

At last one morning, the Captain was holding a skein of silk for her to wind. Tia Maria had fallen into an uneasy doze through very excess of terror at the latest tale. Several times their eyes met when the skein was tangled — such a tiny skein of golden-yellow silk to mean so much. And each time Doña Mercedes became more stately and more timid, while the Captain's cheeks burned like a boy's. Their talk died away to broken sentences, and then the hush of noontide lay over the great, hot, fragrant garden, and only the heavy droning of bees among the roses broke the stillness. Doña Mercedes put out a trembling hand to clear another snarl, and — Tia Maria

popped bolt upright in her chair. "Blood of all the blessed saints!" she cried. "What was that I heard?" And she peered up into the gently stirring branches of the old tree, and made ready to flee.

"It was a wild man, perhaps," said the Captain, with a tremulous laugh; and Doña Mercedes took up the conversation quite as composedly as if she had lived in the world all her life. But when the Captain was going, she murmured: "You must tell Don Enrique for me."

Of course he told Don Enrique at once, and of course Don Enrique was quite astonished at the commonplace thing which had been going on right under his patrician nose, and quite scandalized, and very positive, in his grave, courteous way, that all such thoughts must be dropped at once — positive as only a great man who ruled a valley could be. And Captain Manuel was quite sure that he loved the lady, could not live without her, would win her in the end — sure as only a big, impetuous heart like his could make a man. So Don Enrique politely regretted that he could not have the honor of receiving the Captain in his home again, and the Captain bowed very

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low and clanked out under the big, gloomy arch of the gateway for almost the last time.

Now I doubt if either of them had really been in love. But they were ready to grow into it, and forced separation has been a fertile soil for propagating love, ever since the world began. The little girl was very dutiful and sat with her father every evening, merry and smiling and tender as ever; but across the big, gleaming table she may sometimes have seen a vision of a longing, boyish face. Don Enrique had seen visions across that same table, you remember. Perhaps in time Doña Mercedes might have watched the vision till it came to mean more to her than the great house and the family name and the love of her father himself.

And the Captain fell into a very fever of devotion, and for more than a month he stayed in his quarters, writing Catalan love-songs on the edges of commissary returns, and gazing gloomily at his sword and spurs. Billiards and cards knew him no more; the black horse fretted in the paddock and looked unsayable things at the frightened groom; the brown-skinned girls of the countryside lived in peace and amity with their reconciled lovers. Per-

haps the Captain's devotion might have endured, and all that splendid energy of his might have been turned to good and useful things at last.

All that is mere speculation. We shall never know, and it does not matter. The day of Spain was passing in the Islands. Outside there had long been rumors of ugly things; sudden, secret death and smoldering insurrection, killing of priests and burning of towns and terror-stricken people everywhere. Now at last they penetrated even to the valley, — stories of raids on distant *haciendas*, and assassinations on lonely trails, and a little army massed in the foot-hills back of Santa Lucia. It was as if a chill wind swept over the sunny plains and rolling hills and busy, treacherous river, and none of the lean, bearded, sun-bronzed men could tell whence it came.

Don Enrique, that great man, did not heed it. When news came of a wondrous great buck seen near Ascaris, he insisted on setting out to capture it. "A bit of venison is what you need to put the roses back," he said to Doña Mercedes, standing tall and strong in his boots, and tapping her cheek with his gauntlet. "Insurrection! Nonsense, *chi-*

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quita, it is only the talk of these poor, foolish Indians. I wave my riding-whip at them, and phooh!" — he blew a quick breath, kissed her, and rode off in the gray chill of the morning.

But toward evening a man dragged himself in — old Canuto the huntsman, cut and bleeding — and told Doña Mercedes how the party had been ambuscaded and had fought its way to a thicket of bamboo, and how they must have help or perish.

While she stood half stunned and helpless, came Captain Manuel, uncalled, and said simply: "I am going to him, Doña mia." He did not tell her that all the country was up in arms, that he was going to his death. I doubt if he even thought of that, as he stood before her and saw her big, beseeching eyes. All the carelessness and lightness of his nature fell away, as he stood before the lady for whom he was to die. And yet, as he turned to go, a bit of the spirit of old Spain stirred in him, and he bent toward her. "I kiss your hand, my lady," he said.

Then Doña Mercedes understood, and with a little cry she flung herself into his arms. One little moment she knew that all the secret

of life was hers — and then she took a white rose from her hair and gave it to him. “My colors!” she said, and none of her ancient house had ever stood more proud and stately to watch her knight go out to battle, and none ever went more steadfast and strong and lovable than that boy of the common folk of Cataluña.

There’s not much more to tell, of course. The Captain found Don Enrique, and at dawn they went out together, with their men, in one of those deeds of splendid courage which once made their country mistress of half the world. But a poor, foolish Indian, with a well-cleaned Mauser and a firm rest at five hundred *metres*, and the wrongs of three centuries to right, stopped their poor, proud, Spanish hearts.

The few men who were left brought them back to Doña Mercedes, standing pale and stately in the great courtyard, and on Don Enrique’s breast they found a miniature which might have been his little girl, but was not, and on the Captain’s a white rose dabbled with red.

As I said, all this happened when the world was young. I know, for I rode through Echague once, and I saw Doña Mercedes’

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eyes. They are friendly and inquiring still, but the smile comes from an old, old heart. And yet, after all, is it so bad? Don Enrique and the Captain are very quiet indeed in the great garden, and perhaps the valley is none the less happy that their imperious wills are quiet, too. The river still runs, and the boatmen sing on its long reaches, and the hot sunny air floats over field and hill and forest with vivifying strength, and you would hardly know that they were gone. Perhaps Don Enrique might never have been reconciled. Perhaps the Captain might have changed. There are a dozen perhappses. And now Doña Mercedes has the great house — after all it is not unlike a convent in its quiet and its peace — and the memory of two strong men who loved her until death.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT OKIMI LEARNED

SLOWLY the picture faded, and somewhere near me I heard the priestess of Lal sobbing.

"You saw it, too?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "I saw it too. And oh! I'm sorry for her, but it was better that than nothing. Far better that than nothing! There's nothing else in life like love —"

Suddenly, in the solemn hush of that dim, lamp-lighted room, I heard a chuckle of cynical amusement. The priestess of Lal heard it, too, and faced me with beautiful, blazing eyes, and flaming cheeks still damp with tears.

"Did you dare to laugh at me!" she cried. "I could kill you. Did you *dare?*"

"No," I said. "I believe, as you do, that love —"

Again that rustle of malicious laughter crept across the incense-laden air. In the eyes of the woman a sudden terror showed, and she shrank close to me.

"Who is it laughs?" she whispered. "This is not the first time I've heard it, when I spoke and thought of love. It—frightens me. But," she cried with sudden energy, "I *will* believe that love is everything. If it is not, what becomes of us poor women? Are our lives all wasted on a dream?"

"I do not know what it is that laughs," I said. "Some evil influence seems to dog my path, that turns all the smiling face of the earth to dust and ashes. But do not doubt, and I will not. True love is the one eternal thing in our mortal lives. It is greater than we are ourselves, and it is never wasted—"

Suddenly the flames, in their silver sockets, sucked upward once and then were gone, and we were left in inky darkness, the priestess of Lal and I, cowering close together like two frightened children, while ghostly garments rustled all about us, and ghostly voices whispered, and we saw what Okimi learned.

The girl Okimi is the daughter of parents who are poor and so honest that they sold their daughter for money to pay their debts, just as soon as it was possible. The girl went down to the ship and away across the radiant

Inland Sea without shame, and without a murmur at her fate, for such things happen so often that the gods have no time to listen to complaints.

That is how she came to be living in a strange land, in a gilded house in a garden where big paper lanterns glow in the shrubbery every night. Okimi soon discovered the garden, and learned to be fairly happy there in her placid, childish way, tickling the gold-fish in the fountain basin with long blades of grass, and laughing to see them dart away, playing with the monkeys, and crooning little flower-songs to the big, unfriendly ylang-ylang.

It was all very well while the day lasted. But when the evening shadows began to gather in the corners, Mama San would call from the balcony, "Now, girls!" Okimi tried to be very obedient, and when Mama San called she would rush away as fast as she could, with her funny little toed-in steps, to dab on the rouge and put on the silken kimono and smile bravely over the samisen. Mama San said men like a girl who smiles and sings and is gay, and even Okimi was wise enough to know that the more men liked her, the sooner she would be free and back in sight of dear old

Fuji. That's what she always called him, "dear old Fuji," a rather familiar name to give to a sacred mountain, but then Okimi was a little girl, and big Fujiyama had never seemed to mind.

Okimi never knew just how it came about that the girls, Haristo and Ohana and the rest, began to laugh at her and to say things in the English she found it so hard to understand. She just managed to make out these words: "Okimi San got sooeetart! Okimi San got sooeetart!" She ran to find her oracle, Mama San.

"What is this 'sooeetart'?" she demanded.

"It is a foreign custom," said Mama San. "These white men, they become as mad. It is one girl always, and if she speaks with another they are very 'jalous' and wish to fight."

"Oh, I know!" cried Okimi. "It is like their honorable marriage."

"It is not like the marriage of Nippon. They have somewhat that they call 'love.' They say always, 'I love yeeoo, sooeetart,' I have heard them. When I was young like you, I had many sooeetart," said Mama San, puffing complacently at her cigarette.

"And what is this thing 'love'?" Okimi persisted.

"Pshaw, child, how should I know? It is some madness inside one; we have it not in Japan. Run and play with the monkeys."

So Okimi went and played with the monkeys, and asked them what love is. She was a curious little thing. But they only grinned horribly at her and chattered, and the goldfish did not seem to know, and the ylang-ylang blossoms were silent about it, though she sang them her very prettiest song.

"Foolish flowers," she cried, "you do not know our tongue," and she flung them in the fountain basin and set the bright fish scurrying.

And still the girls, the tired-looking, laughing little girls, would cry, "Okimi San got sooeetart! Okimi San got sooeetart!" And still Okimi San went on asking the trees and the flowers and the birds, "What is sooeetart? What is this 'love'?" And they never could understand and answer.

Even Buddh would not tell her, even black, ugly, good little Buddh, who sat cross-legged above the pyramid of dough-cakes on the dresser and protected Okimi. Buddh would

not tell her, though she asked him time and time again, with her head on the floor at his feet, as humbly as could be.

So one night when the man they called Sweetheart came, Okimi asked him. He looked blank at first, and she was afraid he was not going to tell her. Then suddenly he gathered her up in his arms, and kissed her on her laughing eyes and pouting lips and little, dimpled chin. "That is love," said he.

Now Okimi had long been practising that honorably foolish and disgusting foreign habit, the kiss. She tried hard, for Mama San, the oracle, said men like girls who know how to kiss. Generally she shut her eyes very tight and screwed up her lips and held her breath. But this time, when Sooeetart said, "This is love," and his lips touched hers, she seemed to have no breath at all, and her eyes stayed open and looked right into his, and — Okimi wriggled out of Sweetheart's arms and ran away as fast as she could with her funny little toed-in steps.

And all the girls together couldn't pull her back. But next morning she gave the juiciest orange to dear, ugly little Buddh who sat cross-legged in the corner and protected her.

She called Sweetheart "Jiji" after that. Jiji means old man, but if you know how to say it just right, it can mean dearest, littlest, biggest, belovedest old man. Okimi said it that way.

Jiji made a most delightful playmate, after Okimi had learned not to be afraid of him. He was so big; when he knelt on a cushion, one of his feet went under the bed, and she had to move a chair to make room for the other. And he was so strong, and insisted on carrying her all about the house in a sort of triumphal procession, whereat the monkeys and parrots chattered and shrieked in amazement, while Okimi kicked him in the ribs and cried "Gid ap" in Japanese, and swore at him innocently in Tagalo, the way she had heard the native coachman talk to his horses. Such romps as they used to have.

But she liked the quiet hours best, when they were alone together, and the samisen waked the echoes of a thousand sorrows. It was sweet to hear the echoes of the sorrows, and then look into Jiji's eyes. And then he had to see if anything had changed since his last visit, and they would make an important tour of inspection, hand in hand. There was

the little pot of iris which she was trying so hard to make live in this strange land. And the wrinkled old dwarf of a pine-tree, not much taller than Jiji's longest finger. And there was Buddh, who sat behind the little bowl of blazing oil and protected Okimi. Often, after Jiji was asleep, she would creep out very softly to kneel and say, "Dear Buddh, mighty Buddh, now we know what love is. We thank thee for telling us." And ugly little Buddh, sitting there cross-legged in the tiny, flickering spot of light, smiled back at her most knowingly.

All the girls liked Jiji. He was always making them laugh, and laughter is a pleasant thing. Somehow the food wouldn't stay on his chop-sticks, and so one or two of them must come to his relief. They would pick out the snowiest grains of rice for him, and the juiciest bits of fish and seaweed, and the fattest of the little green plums. Sometimes they would get to racing with each other, and pop things into Jiji's mouth till he could only hold up his hands and shake his head in mournful protest. Then, when he got his breath, he was as likely to say "*Doyo mashi tashi*" as anything.

Jiji was very proud of his accomplishment in the language. He had one phrase which he used as often as he could. It was "*Sayonara de gans*," and it always made the girls laugh very heartily, for they didn't know what "*de gans*" meant. Jiji didn't know either, so when they laughed he thought he had made a joke in an unfamiliar tongue, and he laughed, too. Then they would all laugh, and Jiji would go swinging down to his carriage with his big strides, and the girls would all crowd to the window and call after him, as he drove away, "*Sayonara! Goo' bye, Jiji San. Sayonara de gons!*"

Okimi didn't run to the window with the rest, but hid in her room, those days, and was very busy. A festival of her people was approaching, and she had determined to make for Jiji the very beautifullest kimono that ever was known. From Kobe came a bolt of silk, the wonderful crêpe which makes you catch your breath when the man unrolls it. Blue, it was, and softly blended from the deep, quiet shadow of the Inland Sea to the tint that trembles in the throat of an unfolding iris, and the artist-weaver had even caught the hint of color which rests on Fujiyama when

the springtime days are near. And over all he had scattered handful after lavish handful of snowy cherry-blossoms.

Okimi hung over it for many days, not daring to cut a thing so precious. And she called in her dearest friend, sweet-faced little Misao San, and they held it up to the light and draped it about them, and fondled it, and feasted their starved little souls on it.

When at last it was cut, Okimi would sit on the floor to sew while Misao sang to her. One day Misao happened to remember an old, old song. It goes something like this:

White is all the cherry-garden
In the moonlight there below;
Poor lost petals fluttering downward
Cold, like snow.

I am lost as are the blossoms —
My heart is full of lonely pain —
Come for me, dear lord my master
E'er the cherries bloom again.

Misao sang, and Okimi, listening, gazed at something very far away. And she gathered up the pictured blossoms, and pressed them very softly. Misao, looking as fluffy and gentle and bewildered as a kitten, let the samisen

fall with a crash, and Okimi came back to her.

"Okimi, dear," said Misao timidly, "do you know what love is?"

"Love?" echoed Okimi. "Why, love is —" She went over to the window. "Look, Misao San, the iris will surely blossom soon. Here is a bud. Love is — and see, the so-strong little pine-tree has sent out three — four — six sharp new needles!" She patted him gently. "Love — why, love is everything."

"Can you see it?" asked dreamy, practical little Misao.

Okimi looked at the swelling iris, and the pure, delicate cherry-blossoms on the silk, and Buddha, sitting cross-legged above his dough-cakes.

"Yes," said Okimi, "you can see it everywhere."

"Can you feel it?"

The breeze came creeping in, sweet with the scents of the green world, and stirred Okimi's sleeve.

"Yes," she answered, "everywhere you feel it."

"And hear it?" asked Misao, wondering.

A cock crowed bravely in the yard, and there came a burst of distant, childish laughter.

"And hear it everywhere," said Okimi, and she began to hum: "White is all the cherry-garden."

"This love must be a strange thing," said Misao sleepily, curling up on the cushions. "I do not understand it. Why cannot I see it, and hear it, and feel it, if it is everywhere?"

So Okimi hid in her room and sewed away, day after day, till she sewed a hole into the end of her little pink finger. Jiji San discovered it and demanded an explanation.

"It is nothing," Okimi answered. "I am just making a worthless gift for thee. Soon it will be the New Year's of Nippon, and it is a custom to bring gifts."

"What gift shall I bring for thee?" Jiji asked.

Okimi made a wrinkle come in her forehead before she could answer that question. "I think," she said at last, "I think I should like a monkey."

"But there are many monkeys already," Jiji objected.

"Chungo pinches me, and Bungsaksan is very dirty," Okimi answered gravely. "I

want a monkey all my own. Just a very little monkey, little as that — ” She held out her absurd little hand, no bigger than a baby’s. “ I could talk to him when you are not here.”

“ Child,” Jiji promised laughingly, “ you shall have a monkey little enough to go climbing about our pine-tree.”

When New Year’s came, Okimi was busy as could be. There was the “ Christmas-tree ” to make, a bare branch hung from the ceiling. It took a long time to tie the fluttering strips of red and gilded paper on all the twigs, and fasten the tiny white storks in their places. Then there were new dough-cakes to be made for Buddh, and his bowl to be filled with special, perfumed oil. And she must hunt for the very sweetest spray of ylang-ylang, and go to buy an orange. He fared very well that day, the good little Buddh who sat cross-legged in the corner and smiled back at Okimi.

When all that was finished, and Misao San had done her hair and she had dressed in her gayest and laid out the new kimono, done at last, for Jiji, it was dusk and she had not long to wait, there in the happy, expectant silence.

“ Here is thy monkey,” Jiji said. His

voice was strained, but Okimi did not notice it. She was busy with the frightened, clinging, furry thing.

"I cannot thank thee," she said. "Here is an insignificant gift I have made for thee. Put it on."

Jiji fingered the soft folds of the kimono nervously. "Not now," he said. "I have to go now."

"What, on our night?" cried Okimi. "It is well," she added bravely. "Thou wilt return after a little — be still, little brown one, I will not hurt thee — and we will eat then. Mama San gave me a beautiful chicken for us. She is very good to me."

Jiji grew still more nervous. "Okimi ca," he said at last, "I — well, the Regiment sails to-morrow."

"Sails?" Okimi repeated dully, sliding to the floor.

"To America," Jiji explained. "The Regiment is ordered home, and I must go with it. I am a soldier."

"Oh," said Okimi. Her face, as she huddled there on the floor, was hidden under the gay pink lining of her sleeve. "America? Is it — is it far to America?"

"Very far," he answered.

"Oh," said Okimi. The monkey tugged at her sleeve, and she raised her head a little. "It does not matter," she said sturdily. "Very soon now I shall have bought myself from Mama San. I shall be free, and I will come to thee. I will go anywhere for thee, so it does not matter — much. Put on thy kimono."

Jiji's nails were cutting into his palms and he did not know it. "Thou canst not come, Okimi. In America I — I —" there are some things it's hard to say, even to a broken plaything. "I am married in America."

"Oh," said Okimi. She gave the monkey a little push and he went scuttling under the bed, with shrill cries of alarm. "But, oh, my beloved, let me come to thee! I will be her servant. Let me but come. She will not care. In Nippon are many who live so."

"In America," said Jiji, "they do not understand. You cannot come, Okimi. It would ruin me."

Then Okimi did what all her sisters of the East, and some not of the East, have learned to do. She bowed her head and said very

quietly: "Thou knowest what is best for thee. It shall be so."

The little monkey, in the silence, poked out his head and looked up at big Jiji with a quick, silent grin, as a frightened monkey will. And Jiji, looking down at the gay rumpled figure at his feet, said something that sounded like "Godamit." Then he cleared his throat very harshly. "*Sayonara, Okimi ca,*" he muttered. "*Sayonara de gans,*" and he laughed unsteadily as he went out.

"*Sayonara, Jiji San,*" said Okimi.

For a long time she lay quite still. So long that the frightened, curious monkey crept out to look about him. He stretched out his claw-like hand and plucked inquiringly at the gay bundle on the floor. Okimi did not stir, and he drew back his lips in a nervous grin. He made a little rush and grinned back inquiringly at the bundle, another and another, and took heart. The flame attracted him, and he scrambled to the dresser and stood face to face with Buddh. He jumped back with his grin of frightened surprise, but Buddh did not even deign to look at him. After a moment he sidled closer, glancing with quick hard eyes now at the bundle, now at the god. At last

he stretched out his tiny brown hand and touched Buddh's knee. He dipped a wee finger in Buddh's perfumed oil, and tasted it. Then he dipped in both hands and splattered, as you have seen a baby in its bath, and grinned up maliciously, ready to run. But Buddh gazed straight ahead, unmoved, and the monkey, bold at last, gave the orange a most tremendous little shove. It tottered, and bumped down to the floor, and went rolling under the bed, and the monkey followed it with shrill little cries of triumph.

The noise startled Okimi and she raised her head. Then she went blindly over to Buddh, ugly, wrinkled, good little Buddh, who sat cross-legged and protected her. She patted the ridiculous little dough-cakes with lingering, caressing hands, and stirred the spray of flowers so that they gave out their sweetest odor. She bent very low before the god.

"Mighty Buddh," she pleaded, "he is my sooeetart. I am just a little girl, and I love him. Please give him back to me, dear Buddh."

She looked up at him timidly, seeking assurance, but he did not smile back at her. She was going to say more, trying to make Buddh

understand how extremely important it was, but just then Mama San knocked at the door and told her she must come down-stairs.

So Okimi dabbed on the rouge, and smoothed out her gay silken kimono, and took her samisen, and hurried down as fast as she could with her funny little toed-in steps.

CHAPTER VIII

WHERE THERE IS NO TURNING

AGAIN the swaying lamps burned dim above us, and the priestess of Lal, all trembling, looked up at me with terror-haunted eyes.

"Poor little child," she whispered. "Poor little life-mocked child! That is the bitter fate which women fear, to be sucked dry of their fresh sweetness, of their life, and then be tossed aside. Oh, I have seen it many times. We give our all, and it is wasted because men —"

"Not all men," I said. "Not all men are like Okimi's warrior sweetheart."

"They are all alike," cried the priestess of Lal vehemently. "In their hearts they are all alike, lighter than air, unstabler than water, more fickle than nectar-seeking butterflies. They love our beauty, and when that is gone — Look you," she cried. "This is the tragedy of a woman, to be beautiful, to be

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loved, and to grow old. Look," she said. "I will show you."

Once again the light of the silver lamps was quenched, and silent, side by side, the priestess of Lal and I looked far down the weary path which Eastern women travel not knowing where an end shall be.

In all the ride from Segovia along the beach, Hazlitt met only three living things, three women staring at him out of the folds of dingy calico which shielded their faces from the glare of sun and sea. One was young and very graceful; another was not so young, a comely, ox-like thing, laden with comfortable fat. The third was old and bent, with a hideously wrinkled, hopeless face, the mask of that impatient death which shrivels away the women of the hot Eastern world, outside and in. For a moment they startled him. They were like phantoms risen to confront him on the lifeless beach, for the youngest was but a memory of what the eldest had been a little time before, and the eldest only a prophecy of what the youngest soon would be. As they stood and watched him passing by, shifting their worn feet uneasily on the

blistering sand, Hazlitt felt a mild stirring of pity at the familiar sight.

"Hoy, friends," he hailed them. "Can one of you tell me the way to the plantation of Don Raymundo?"

The girl looked at him shyly under lowered lids; the grandmother, squatting on her haunches, puffed at a ragged fragment of cigar she carried and gazed out to sea; but the mother clutched volubly at the opportunity of speech.

"Go on till you come to the mango which blew down in the typhoon of ten years ago," she said, "and the road is there. It is called the 'Trail that has no Turning.' Don Raymundo is a Castilian of the noblest, and he is the richest *hacendero* in the world. Each year he loads a hundred ships with sugar. The plantation is called the 'Hacienda without a Name.' Don Raymundo has a daughter whose name is Señorita Dolores. She is the most beautiful woman in the world. His wife is Doña Ceferina." For a moment a look of dislike crossed the broad, good-natured face. "They call her Doña, and she is very proud, but after all she is just a *mestiza*, almost a Filipina like us. She —"

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Hazlitt broke into her chatter with his thanks, flipped a coin in the air, and jogged on till he had left them far behind, three moving dots on the waste, plodding the way of Malay womenfolk.

Hidden in the green-shrouded wilderness of the lower hills, the Hacienda without a Name lay under the sunset enchanting as a lost fragment of some old world, where labor next the soil was the happiest thing in life. And up in the *sala* of the great house on the hill, the mistress of the *hacienda* stared at Hazlitt over her cup. She was a beautiful woman, but under the Caucasian mold of her features another face was beginning to show dimly, the face of a race whose very heat and strength of life fuses all lines down to mere shapelessness of flesh. A part of Doña Ceferina had been overtaken by the unrelenting advance of middle age.

"You say my husband is a prince, Señor?" Doña Ceferina echoed doubtfully over her cup, and her soft forehead wrinkled in bewilderment. This strange young visitor had puzzling notions of what constitutes conversation, a diversion of which Doña Ceferina was ex-

tremely fond. "Without doubt," she said, "I think that is a mistake."

Hazlitt looked at her in mingled amusement and vexation. In all his wonderful day of discovery, this talkative, commonplace woman had been the sole jarring note. But Doña Ceferina, oblivious to his emotions, sat in the cool twilight of the big room and poised her cup, like some hybrid goddess of justice about to render a decision.

"Beyond doubt, it is a mistake," said Doña Ceferina. "Don Raymundo's family is one of the oldest in Spain, but it has never married with royalty. There are few princes in Spain not of the royal blood; it is not like Russia." The word gave her a clue to a topic of real interest, and she brightened. "When I was a girl, back at school, I met a Russian prince, one summer at Biarritz —"

Over *his* cup, Don Raymundo's tiny Mephistophelian moustache lifted slightly in the mocking smile which was his extremest expression of emotion, and Hazlitt rushed to the righting of his false lead.

"Of course I did not mean that Don Raymundo was a prince in name," he explained, "but in fact, you know."

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Doña Ceferina raised her cup and sipped her chocolate resignedly, but Hazlitt did not heed her.

"The startling, the wonderful thing to an American like me is that he is not only a prince in power, but a prince of another age. The people here on the plantation are his, belong to him personally. Take that thing we saw just now, for example, all those hundreds of people coming in to the plantation kitchen for their suppers —"

Doña Ceferina rose to her opportunity. "If you only knew," she said, "how much rice it takes to feed five thousand people —"

Hazlitt, brimming with the enthusiasm the day had brought him, swept on. "Think of having a jail of your own, and putting people in it when you like, being their law! Why, I dare say they'd follow him to war if he told them to, and — and sack the next plantation. It's — it's positively feudal, you know. That's the only word; all this doesn't belong to our day at all. And yet they say there's no romance left in trade!"

He stopped abruptly, for Doña Ceferina was gazing at him with round eyes. If one could picture the eyes of a ruminative cow,

watching with mild curiosity a serpent which sought to charm her, one would have seen the eyes of Doña Ceferina just then. Don Raymundo smiled inscrutably, and the pause grew awkward.

Suddenly a soft voice came to Hazlitt's relief. "You remember 'feudal,' mamá," it said reassuringly. "Ever so long ago, when they had knights and squires and — and *gens-d'armes*, and people lived in castles, and they had the Inquisition in Spain, and the friars, and — and everything. That was 'feudal.'"

Doña Ceferina sighed with relief and sipped: "Dolores has just come back from school, so she remembers all those things," she explained to Hazlitt. "I learned them once, of course, but one forgets, out here. And so you think we're feudal? I don't know, I'm sure. Of course there aren't any knights any more, or castles, but we *do* have the friars. Listen, señor," and she set her cup on a little table, to give freedom to her hands, and plunged into the story of the latest exaction by the local representative of the hierarchy of the Philippines.

No one minded her much. Her husband



"Dolores gazed down on her little world as it went to sleep."
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sat with half-closed eyes and puffed at his cigarette, Dolores turned to her window and gazed down on her little world as it went to sleep, and Hazlitt's eyes persisted in wandering to the girlish figure, glowing in a belated, ruddy shaft of light. Decidedly, the talkative woman on the beach had shown some discrimination in placing Señorita Dolores on the pinnacle of beauty. Suddenly Hazlitt became aware that Doña Ceferina's tale was told, and that her talk had taken a more personal turn.

"It's so good to have one from our own world to talk to again," she said enthusiastically. "One gets lonely here, with only natives for neighbors. I tremble to think what my existence would have been, after I came back from school, if Don Raymundo had not been here to rescue me." She smiled radiantly at her black and white spouse, as if to include him in the conversation, but he only drew long on his cigarette and puffed the smoke very deliberately toward the ceiling. Hazlitt's eyes wandered to the window again, and Doña Ceferina's followed them.

"Isn't she beautiful?" she whispered.

"Yes," said Hazlitt, half to himself.



"She's like a Madonna, a Madonna whom some great man dreamed of painting and gave up in despair."

"Exactly," Doña Ceferina agreed hastily. "That's just it. She's beautiful as the Virgin herself, and good! Poor child, after three years of Paris and Madrid, to come back to this!" She swept an over-jeweled hand at the great, simple, dignified room. "No wonder she's lonely, poor little dear. Go and talk to her, Señor Hasleet."

Hazlitt accepted his permission with alacrity. As he approached, Doña Dolores glanced timidly at him across the gulf of sex, which tradition and training had fixed between her and all male things not of her blood, and retreated into herself. Her shyness was part of her attraction, Hazlitt thought, and did not find the silence awkward as he stood beside her and looked down with her on the *hacienda*.

In the shaggy village clustered about the squat stone chimney of the mill, groups of girls and young men were laughing and splashing about the wells; from the little groves which embowered the houses, the evening fires glowed red; the light breeze car-

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ried, even to that distance, a hint of the pungent wood-smoke. As Hazlitt watched the peaceful scene, all the love of the open which had led him wandering through life rolled over him in a wave.

"Jove, it's a good old world, after all," he said.

The girl glanced up at him quickly. "After all?" she echoed plaintively. "Tell me, señor. The Sisters always said that the world was bad, and we must be afraid of it. When you speak so, *saying* that it is good, I wonder if you also do not think it is bad. Why isn't it good, if we are happy in it?"

Hazlitt smiled down into her puzzled eyes. Decidedly they were matter-of-fact, these women of the *hacienda*. "It is good," he assured her, with the calm philosophy of his thirty years behind him. "Of course it's good." Still she looked up at him, forgetting her shyness, and a gust of protectiveness and elder-brotherly affection for this tender, budding woman-thing took hold of him. "It's good," he urged, "and you will always be happy in it."

Back in the dimness Doña Ceferina was sipping her third cup of chocolate, while Ray-

mundo smoked with half shut eyes and smiled inscrutably.

Like Dorcas or Abigail or whoever she was of old, Doña Ceferina sat among her maidens. There were half a dozen of them on the floor, sewing and spinning and chattering in subdued voices, while the mistress of the *hacienda* sat enthroned in the midst of them. But unlike whoever she was of old, Doña Ceferina had a card-table before her, and on the other side of the table Hazlitt sat, and the two smiled companionably across at each other as they sorted fat bundles of cards.

They were playing *panguingui*. One plays *panguingui* with six packs of cards and much patience. Doña Ceferina and Hazlitt had played a good deal of it since they first met, six months before, and Hazlitt's patience had never wearied. Neither had the patience of Señorita Dolores, which is more to the point, for she had to stand behind Hazlitt's chair and help him with the unfamiliar cards. She was standing there now.

"Hazleet, it is your lead," said Doña Ceferina, gathering up her hand. It was a sign of the fellowship established between them that

she called him. Hazlitt in the good, round, Spanish way, without any fuss over titles. It was a stronger sign that she sat with her feet tucked up in her chair, native-fashion. "One gets used to it," she had explained, the first time she ventured it in his presence, "and it's much more comfortable."

"Hazleet, I shall beat you again," said Doña Ceferina. "Lead!"

Hazlitt laid his finger inquiringly on a card, and looked back over his shoulder, where a pair of interested eyes signalled approval. Suddenly he spied a forgotten card down in the corner of his fistful. Señorita Dolores gave a small wail of dismay as he played it, and Doña Ceferina smiled in pleasant derision.

"I mistook it for a King," said Hazlitt in apology.

"It is a mistake," said the remorseless Doña Ceferina, "which costs you a *media peseta*. Now play again."

Hazlitt played again and again, and lost each time, and enjoyed Doña Ceferina's little triumph almost as much as she did. She wasn't half bad, if she was not exciting, this plump good-natured Doña Ceferina, with her

eternal cigarette and her cards or novel or conversation. Hazlitt smiled whimsically at that last thought. "What are you laughing at, Hazleet?" his opponent demanded.

He had been thinking of the Frenchwoman who was famed for having such a marvellous gift for conversation, and none at all for dialogue, but he couldn't very well tell Doña Ceferina that. "At the way I'm playing," he replied.

"You couldn't well play worse," said Doña Ceferina good-humoredly, taking toll of her bit of silver. "Lead again."

Hazlitt *could* play worse, and promptly did it. There are infinite possibilities of badness, even in *panguingui*. Not at all a bad person to share a secret with, this simple, matter-of-fact Doña Ceferina. And he believed they were sharing one. In Doña Ceferina's placidly romantic bosom, he guessed, had grown a vision of a young prince come out of the West to rescue her imprisoned princess from this tropical Castle of Indolence. A vision had come to him, too, a vision which made him lean back and forget his cards. Six months ago a beach-comber, gilded and respectable, of course, but still a beach-comber, an adven-

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turer, without a country; and now, perhaps, a man whom many a petty prince might envy. Fancy ruling undisputed with Señorita Dolores over the quiet domain of the "Hacienda without a Name!" Jove, what a queen she'd make.

A hand stole down over his and pityingly pointed out the proper card, and Hazlitt sternly repressed an impulse to fling away the cards and take the hand, and keep it. The time was drawing near when he must put his fortune to the test.

The cards ran out, and Doña Ceferina glowed triumphant. "Another game, Hazleett?" she asked.

Hazlitt laughingly turned his pocket out to show that the modest sum allotted for the stakes of the day was exhausted, and Doña Ceferina swept up her little heap of silver. "You play worse than ever, I think," she said frankly.

"Still, I may learn *panguingui* before I die," said Hazlitt. A sudden impulse seized him. He leaned forward and fixed the mistress of the *hacienda* with his eye. "I rather think, Doña Ceferina," he said, with slow emphasis, "that I shall have to stay out here

till I die. There seems to be no escape. I shall have to stay and — learn to play *panguini*. What do you think?"

In the heavy eyes of Doña Ceferina a small glow kindled, as of the surviving remnants of a very tiny fire. Hazlitt had seen them light that way before, when Doña Ceferina reached the climax of a novel. The glow deepened, and she looked at him understandingly. Her hand trembled a little on the table. "Why not, Hazleet?" she said. "It — it would be very pleasant for all of us. I —" She rose hastily. "I shall have to leave you for a minute. I hope you and Dolores can amuse yourselves till luncheon," she said with elaborate innocence, and went away.

Hazlitt followed poor unsuspecting Dolores, thus left as a ewe lamb to the wolf, over to the window, and stood looking down with her, while the half-dozen maidens let needle and spindle fall, and exchanged knowing glances.

The rains had come and gone, and the tropical world was thrilling with the swift rush of its springtime. The black fields were mistily green with the new-set spikes of cane, the sky was fleecy with white banks of cloud, the very air was sweet and full of life. Hazlitt drew

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a deep breath of it. "God!" he said, "what a good old place this old world is to live in."

Dolores glanced up at him. No one would have called her a Madonna now. The spring-tide had entered into her, and she was vibrant with a thrill of living of which no monkish painter ever dreamed. "Why do you talk like that?" she demanded. "Of course it's a good world."

Hazlitt gazed down into the upturned eyes. "And you are happy in it, Dolores?" he asked.

At his tone Dolores flushed rosy and turned away, and her hand gripped the edge of the broad sill with little, helpless, useless fingers. Hazlitt laid his hand over it protectingly, and it did not draw away. "You are happy, Dolores?" he repeated.

"Of course," said Dolores faintly. "Why shouldn't I be, when everything is — so beautiful and — and good?"

"Happy Dolores," said Hazlitt. And then Don Raymundo rode round the turn in the shrubbery below and swung from the saddle. Dolores shrank back, but Don Raymundo only smiled up inscrutably. If he had seen the little

comedy, he gave no sign. "I'll join you in a minute," he called to them.

A flash of anger swept over Hazlitt at this man whose mere approach took all the witchery from life. He pressed Dolores' hand before he released it. "She shall be happy," he muttered defiantly, to Don Raymundo and the world. "She shall be happy always."

"There seems to be a great deal of unnecessary time in the world," Don Raymundo observed with his perverse triviality. He and Hazlitt had run across each other in the *sala* after their siesta, and now they were sitting with their long chairs drawn up before a window, waiting for the end of the day.

"Perhaps there is," Hazlitt agreed, slowly gathering resolution for his plunge. "And yet, with agreeable companionship, and perhaps a wife — Don Raymundo, we Americans are blunt. I want to marry Doña Dolores."

Don Raymundo smoked placidly for a moment. "I have been expecting this," he said at last. "I have — shall I be blunt? — been fearing this."

Hazlitt flushed. "I know it seems presumptuous," he said. "People will call me

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a climber. And yet — We have no aristocracy in my country, no recognized aristocracy, as perhaps you know. But of such families as we have, mine is not the worst. For five generations — ”

“ I care little about families,” said Don Raymundo coolly.

The tone was courteous, but the words stung Hazlitt. “ I am not a rich man,” he said, “ but I have enough. I was afraid at first that it was the *hacienda* I cared for, not the wealth of it, but the power and romance of the life here. That *was* what took me at first, but now it’s Doña Dolores herself. I know it. I had hoped — ” he hesitated. After six months of almost daily intercourse it was as impossible to break through Don Raymundo’s smiling reserve as it had been at first. “ I had hoped that you might find the company of another white man not disagreeable, that we might perhaps even become friends, but — all that doesn’t matter, but simply this: it isn’t the *hacienda* I want.”

Don Raymundo spread out his hands with a gesture of utter weariness. “ I care so little for the *hacienda* and who has it and what becomes of it,” he said, “ that if the burden of

it could be lifted from me I should be almost happy, I think." And while scorn for the eternal posing of the man was setting Hazlitt's lips, he went on: "My friend, and I call you friend because I feel a friendliness for you, I am going to tell you a story I never thought to tell to any one." Don Raymundo's momentary energy dropped from him. "If you care to listen," he amended, in his most uninterested manner.

"Go on, please," said Hazlitt impatiently.

"It is a story of a young man in Spain," said Don Raymundo, "a boy who had a mama and a sister and a name, all of them associated with a rambling stone house that perched on a sunburnt hill. He also had a somewhat lively and energetic brain, and a very moderate education. All he lacked was an income. I hope I do not bore you more than usual?"

Hazlitt moved restlessly, and Don Raymundo continued: "Observe the sequence. The wealth of dreams is traditionally Oriental, and the Philippines lie in the Orient. So the boy, lying there beneath the broken roof of the gaunt stone house, and being sadly in need of an income, dreams of a journey over

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sunny seas to a region where Spaniards dwell in palaces and gain untold gold, living like little gods together on broad acres where cane rustles and coffee-blossoms gleam and the hemp sends up its never-dying stalk. *Demonio!*" said Don Raymundo, with a mocking lightness bitter as it well could be, "I seem to be falling into the mood of that boy who dreamed."

Don Raymundo's silence seemed expectant, somehow, and Hazlitt asked: "He came?"

"He came," said Don Raymundo, "and he awoke. They say that he found the rustling cane and the gleaming blossoms a bit monotonous, even while they turned to gold beneath his touch. His environment, I take it, must have been rather like —" He motioned toward the window and the world that lay outside it, the fields stretching away in the burning light to the dim edge of the forest, the endless sweep of the jungle, the distant glow of the sleeping sea, all the untamable world that pressed around the "Hacienda without a Name."

"Like this," Hazlitt assented reluctantly.

"Like this," Don Raymundo agreed.
"People say he said at last that proper com-

panionship, and perhaps a wife — *Diós mio*, I grow stupid. His nearest neighbor, who was half a native, was — blessed, I believe the proper word is — blessed with a daughter. A most charming young woman in those days, they tell me, very gay, very gentle, very affectionate, most accomplished; she had spent many years on the Continent, I believe. In short, she was an unusually beautiful and attractive young person, very like — ”

“Like — ” Hazlitt began unwillingly, and stopped.

“Like Dolores,” Don Raymundo assented for him. “And this interesting young woman naturally felt ill at ease among her homestay-ing half-countrymen, and naturally had much in common — but all that is easily understood. They were married. And that,” Don Raymundo said with languid brutality, “seems to have been the ending of the young man’s second dream. Since then he has lived with open eyes.”

Hazlitt felt a twinge of shame come over him at listening. After all, the law which establishes a neutral strip of silence between men is based on something deeper than mere convention.

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"Don't you think," Hazlitt asked at last — he had to say something — "that this young man took himself too seriously, too tragically? If he had given more to life, had gone about among people — "

"I understand," Don Raymundo interrupted him, "that he declined to go out among his countrymen, where his wife was received only as a favor to himself and his name. He was a somewhat Quixotic young man, you see. And his Filipino friends, though worthy people doubtless, were somewhat unattractive and dull to both the young man and his wife. So in the end he was restricted to the joys of home. And his wife grew old more rapidly than he. There seemed to be something in her blood that made her grow old quickly."

For a moment Hazlitt felt a gleam of pity for the lonely man beside him. Then his back stiffened.

"I do not think," said Hazlitt, and for his life could not keep the vibration of scorn from his voice, "that I love Doña Dolores merely because she is young and beautiful. What I want is to make *her* happy. We can grow old together."

Don Raymundo smiled, and for once his smile was patient instead of mocking. "You are like that young man of mine now," he said gently. "You remind me very much of him. When you are older, you will judge less harshly. And aren't you overlooking something? Is it my happiness that counts, or yours, or even Dolores', though it's hard that she should suffer for the mistake her father made." He drew himself up in his chair and looked at Hazlitt with a new light in his eyes.

"Have you any right to marry her?" he asked almost sternly. "What of your children? And their children? A hundred years from now, will they be — *white*? Or must they go on forever belonging nowhere, despised by half the brothers of their blood, and themselves despising the other half? Where will it end?"

Enlightenment burst on Hazlitt in a flash. This was no lover's obstacle, to be surmounted by theatric leaps and bounds. He had come face to face with one of the truths of life, Nature's unescapable law of blood. He saw them coming, the slow generations, men of no race and country. "My God!" he said,

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and gripped the arms of his chair till the cane splintered.

A door opened at the other end of the big room. "Our companions are coming," said Don Raymundo quietly, and rose with punctilious courtesy.

After the greetings Doña Ceferina went directly to the gleaming tray which bore the chocolate and biscuits which buoy one from the dead languor of the siesta to the full tide of evening life. Hazlitt sank back in his chair again. Suddenly a soft voice asked over his shoulder: "You haven't forgotten to save this day week for our *baile*, have you? You must come, you know, because then," Dolores hesitated at her boldness but rattled on, "because then I sha'n't have to dance so often with these stupid native boys."

Hazlitt gripped the arms of his chair again. The moment for decision had come. All those unborn generations were waiting for his answer. Dolores was waiting too, poor, helpless, innocent Dolores. He looked to Don Raymundo for relief, but Don Raymundo, at a window, had turned his back and was puffing at his eternal cigarette. The pause grew long. Then slowly Hazlitt straightened in his

chair, and as he looked up at the wondering face behind him, the law and the prophets were swept away in a gush of pitying affection. Pitying, and then? She seemed so rarely, wonderfully beautiful to him, rare and precious as some golden flower from supernal gardens. He could not let her go, could not give up her surpassing loveliness. "Yes," he said very firmly, "yes, I will come."

"Lalalá!" Doña Ceferina laughed from her place behind the cups. "He speaks as seriously as if he made a vow to Our Lady. It's only a ball, you know, Hazleet. Give the men their chocolate, Dolorcita." She raised her cup and sipped happily. "After all," she said, in a tone of deep content, "there are few things in life more delightful than one's chocolate and cigarette."

Don Raymundo was gazing from his window off into the distance, where the gathering shadows were blending forest and cane-field.

"Chocolate is very good," he said thoughtfully.

Three women tramped in the glare of endless Segovia beach. One was young and graceful; another was a comely, ox-like thing

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of middle age; the third was at the end of life. They halted for a moment to rest, and the grandmother squatted on her haunches and gazed, unseeing, out over the water.

"There will be a wedding at the *hacienda* next month," said the girl.

"Yes," said her mother, "the young American will marry Señorita Dolores. They say he is very rich, richer than Don Raymundo."

"He is very big and handsome," said the girl wistfully. "And Doña Dolores — she is very beautiful and kind."

A flash of jealousy crossed the mother's broad, good-natured face. "Yes," she said, "she is beautiful. But after all she is only a *mestiza*, almost a Filipina like the rest of us. And she will grow old."

Then, having halted a moment, they tramped on along their path like phantoms risen on the lifeless beach, for the youngest was but a memory of what the eldest had been a little time before, and the eldest was only a prophecy of what the youngest soon would be.

CHAPTER IX

AN OPTIMIST

I CANNOT hope to describe to you my dismay at finding myself back in that ancient temple of Tzin Piaôu, nor the dislike with which I looked into the eyes of that old heathen priest, those slant eyes where cynical amusement, like a little, undying flame, danced and flickered.

"And so," said the bland old gentleman, raising himself languidly on his hollowed slab of stone, "and so you find the company of the ladies more agreeable than mine? I do not wonder. How did you leave them all in the temple of Lal?" It would be impossible to indicate the sly mockery which rustled in his tone.

"So that was your doing, too?" I asked.

He moved a deprecatory hand, smiling blandly through me into space. "I may have been used as an unworthy instrument," he murmured, "but for most of your experience,

I fancy, you're indebted to the Little Gods themselves. Did you find amusement, or instruction, was it? — forgive me, I forget — in the Games they showed you?"

"I'm very tired of your Little Gods, if they exist," I said bluntly, for he made me angry. "As I told you once, and as I would tell them to their faces, I think them cowards. I ask you again, do they never give their victims a fair chance? Is there never a single plaything of theirs which, fighting bravely and in good faith, is permitted to win? Are the dice always clogged?"

"You like to see them win?" my old heathen priest asked in bland surprise. "What a very commonplace taste; for people are always winning what they strive for, thousands of them every day. It's only the exceptions, the surprises, which are interesting. I thought you asked to see Life through my eyes. But since your taste runs that way —" he yawned ever so slightly behind his hand — "You'll excuse me, won't you?" he apologized, "but this is an hour which I invariably devote to a nap." He made a little careless, dismissing gesture. "Wander where you choose," said he, "and watch men fight, since

that's your taste, and win — what they may win."

It was my dismissal, and there I saw him last, as I had seen him first, lying motionless on his hollowed slab, smiling blandly, cynically, into Emptiness, with light yet bitter mockery in his smile.

Then, or so it seemed to me, I wandered far and long, and saw many men striving mightily for many things, and most of them were winners, and most of them, winning, found themselves no nearer their hearts' desires. But among them I marked three, and have remembered them, whose striving seemed to me not wholly without interest. The first of them was a very common-seeming man indeed, and the only thing about him which made him worthy of remark was, that he was an optimist.

Samar is a sorry strip of island which rises in gray-green, commonplace, and yet sinister ugliness from a green and treacherous sea. Its coasts are a desolation of over-thrifty vegetation. Its interior, so far as it has been explored, is a wilderness of forest and precipitous mountains. And the people who in-

habit it are worthy of the place, outcasts and refugees from other islands, outlawed men for whom no other spot of earth holds a future.

Toward the end of 1901, soldiers and marines and sailors, the 41st Infantry, U. S. A., among them, were rushed to Samar to punish the murderers of Balangiga and cleanse the plague-spot of the Philippines of its spawn. The work proved to be difficult and slow. The blazing summer had darkened into such winter as the Eastern tropics know, a season of lowering skies and deluges of rain, and dank cold and boisterous winds, and still the quarry flitted elusively from stronghold to stronghold of the untracked mountains, emerging at rare intervals to strike with murderous suddenness at unexpected places and then disappear, as hard to bring to bay as any other beast of prey which makes cunning atone for its lack of strength and courage.

At Sabey, a hopeless town half-way up the east coast of the island, Company B of the 41st was stationed, as hard-fisted, hard-mouthed, hard-living, hard-fighting a set of terriers as ever was enlisted. Its Captain, one Burrell, delighted in catching his pets wild and taming them to his peculiar taste. B's ranks, for the

most part, were filled by transfer from other organizations whose officers were glad to turn over their black sheep. Burrell, by some method of his own, speedily made soldiers, his sort of soldiers, of them, and they swore by him.

It was unusual for B to sit in garrison when the 41st was afield, for the company had a reputation consonant with its character, and was welcome at the front whenever there was action. But all that autumn it was held in quarters, while the rain drummed on the iron roof and reports came in of little battles north and south and west.

"Ev'rybody had a man's size grouch on, fr'm th' Old Man down," they reported afterward. "Ev'rybody but just John Henry Sullivan, him we called Peaceful Henry. You couldn't hammer a grouch onto Peaceful with an axe."

Sullivan was the humorist of the company, a long, lank, freckled figure-of-fun who was tolerated, ordinarily, though unmercifully mocked, for a certain likable simplicity of mind and a childish friendliness for everything. But that fall his antics palled on B. "They was times when we'd a been glad to

kill him," as they said, "if it hadn't been for havin' to look forrard to a long enlistment with him down below."

But at the very end of the year a hope of cornering the enemy appeared, and the spirits of B Company rose accordingly. Midway of its length, Samar narrows till a scant thirty-five miles separates the long rollers of the Pacific shore from the quieter waters of the Visayan Sea. So, at least, the triangulation of the Coast Survey bore witness, then. Until that winter there was no record of men who had crossed the savage island. But a local tradition asserted that an old and long-abandoned trail led from Sabey on the east coast, that very Sabey where B was stationed, to Nalang on the west.

If that ancient trail could be opened once more, Samar would be cut in two, the activity of the skulking outlaws would be impeded, and a scheme of effective reconcentration would be possible at last. The men of B Company felt that their old luck was with them when the duty of making the first reconnaissance of the old trail fell to them.

They were ready to move at once, and soon after reveille, on the morning of December

25th, Captain Burrell, Lieutenant Roberts, and twenty men, all dressed in the blue and khaki of field service, and bearing haversacks bulging with four days' rations, assembled on the beach at Sabey to make an attempt at crossing Samar.

It was an inauspiciously gray and threatening morning. Behind the explorers, breakers crashed thunderously on the sand, and a roaring northeast monsoon whipped spume about in frothy sheets. Before them, the wilderness lay grim and forbidding, in the cold light. But they accepted the rawness and the gloom with the indifference of long acquaintance. Four marches straight westward, of ten miles each at most, child's play to men like them, should bring them to Nalang. There was no breath of adventure in the air.

Yet of the party which faced the hills that morning, seven lie within the shadow still, and only one came out again unaided, seventeen days later, to report that somewhere behind him fourteen men of B, including the Old Man who made it B, lay starving and delirious with fever.

On the morning of the start, they had of course no premonition of all this. Burrell and

Roberts waved careless farewells to the one lady of Sabey, the post surgeon's young wife, the men grumbled aimlessly at the prospect of a wet march and a wet camp, and Sullivan, settling his haversack strap more comfortably, grinned at the disappointed ones in front of quarters who could not go. "Reckon we'll locate that overland route for the *Sumner* this time, sure," he remarked, with a fatuous attempt at humor.

"Fall in," the Captain ordered, and the little column set its front westward and swung off along the drenched banks of Sabey River.

Four days later, as an early nightfall was closing down, eighteen of the party struggled to the summit of a half-wooded ridge in the interior of the island, and the worn-out men straightened up with momentary eagerness to peer into the cloud-hung west. Only the blankness of further up-tumbled ridges and black waves of forest veiled in sheets of rain lay before them, and to north, south, and east as well. Nowhere on the circle of the horizon was a leaden gleam of the guiding sea.

The men seemed dazed. They had made their four marches, of far more than ten miles

each, it seemed, at such cost of strength and courage as no one who has not travelled in that land can comprehend. They had made the last march on all but a remnant of their food, and the baffling trail they followed had led them nowhere. An hour before it had vanished in a thicket. Since then they had cut a trail with their bayonets, pushing for this ridge in the hope that from its summit they might see the coast at last. Instead, they found that they were lost in the Samar hills. Faint from hunger and exertion, chilled to the bone from tramping in clammy clothing and sleeping in drenched blankets, with shoes that burst from their swollen feet like pulp and hung in shreds, already halting of speech and step with the burning weakness of fever, half a dozen of them, they stood there in the beating downpour, stunned, and daunted.

All this had come to them in four days, — that was the paralyzing fact. It appalled them that all their pride of strength should have vanished in that little space, when other days were coming, how many no one knew, of uglier promise. Foiled, while they still had food and strength, by the task they had set themselves, each day of increased weakness

and privation now would call them to increased exertion till the sea was reached — the sea which might, and might not, lie beyond the furthest of those mountains to the west, if it was west. Dumbly they stared at them, avoiding each other's eyes.

Captain Burrell, still weakened by the wound he got in front of Tientsin, was one of the hardest-hit of the fever-victims, and his teeth chattered when he talked, but he retained a humor dryer than the weather. "I reckon we'll camp right here," he said. "H'm. We can't quite fetch the coast to-night, and this ridge is well-drained, anyway. H'm."

The least weary of the men smiled forlornly in response to the spirit that lived in their Old Man, and Sullivan laughed outright. "I've been lookin' for a well-dreened place like this to start my cactus-farm in, sir," he remarked. Already the formalities of rank had vanished, and discipline meant obedience for the common good, not ceremony.

"Might do it, by irrigating," said the Captain. "H'm." He cast a sharp glance at his one unapprehensive subordinate. "The rest of you camp right here," he ordered. "Sul-

livan and I are going back along to stir up those loafers who fell out."

"See here, sir," Lieutenant Roberts cried, in half-hearted protest, for every inch of his six feet of young body was aching dully, "that leg of yours —"

"Is a corker," said the Captain shortly. "H'm. Come along, Sullivan."

An hour later the two, staggering with sleep, herded the last of the sodden, half-delirious stragglers up to the fire which spluttered in the wet and gloom, and the sick men sprawled obediently among their unconscious fellows. For an instant the officer stared down at them. "Hopeful lot, ain't they?" he muttered. "H'm."

"It sure looks some like a graveyard, Captain," said Sullivan cheerfully. The Captain glanced at him again.

"Don't you ever get — blue, Sullivan?" he asked curiously.

Sullivan seemed doubtful. "I — I do' know's I ever thought much about it, sir," he said.

"I reckoned not," said the Captain. "H'm. Well, don't. Go to sleep."

"I was thinkin' I'd keep th' fire goin' a

while, it looked so kind of homelike," Sullivan objected. "I ain't much sleepy. You turn in, sir."

"I'm not sleepy, either," said the other gruffly. "H'm. Roll in now. *Pronto.*" Obediently Sullivan sank down where he stood, and was asleep.

Burrell sat long, brooding over the fire, listening to the deep breaths and smothered groanings of his men. One of them babbled in delirium, piteously, for a moment, and the Captain went and soothed him, awkwardly. Then he stood above him, gazing off into the gulf of blackness to the west. He glanced down at the muttering soldier, and away again into the night. "God damn *you*," he said to the Island of Samar gravely, courteously, as one might deliver a challenge to mortal combat.

Next morning they breakfasted on what was left of their food, consuming all but a precious emergency ration of two tins of bacon, a pound and a half in all. Then they pushed on in what was meant to be a last desperate dash for the coast, going down into a long wide valley smothered in primeval forest.

Every trail had vanished, each step of advance had to be slashed from a jungle of underbrush and creepers, and for all their suffering they gained a scant five miles. They halted at nightfall in a little opening, where they shed their equipments as they stood, and sprawled among them. Sullivan and the Captain, going back for the many stragglers, failed to discover two of them.

They camped that night without food or fire, in a rain that came down harder than ever, if such a thing could be. Next day, without breakfast, they resumed their dogged advance, halting often to rest and search for food. But in that dead season the forest yielded nothing more edible than leaves and bark, and a few woody seed pods like rose-haws in size and shape.

"Hell-apples," Sullivan named those, after he had had opportunity to observe their effects. "They look all right, and they taste all right," he explained, "but they sure do raise hell with your insides."

The men munched them greedily, despite their uncomfortable properties. A time was coming when a rotting log that harbored store of grubs would seem a treasure-house to them.

The bayonets did not hack out a trail as rapidly as they had on the day before, and they had made no more than three miles and a half when night shut down. Yet, slow as the advance was, only half a dozen men were up with it, and, when Burrell would have gone back for the others, his wounded leg crumpled under him. Without a word, Lieutenant Roberts joined Sullivan, and it was midnight when the pair brought in the last straggler they could find. Three were still missing, and the Captain forbade further search. "They'll have to take a chance," he said. "H'm."

When the next day broke, merely a lightening of the gloom under the dripping branches, Lieutenant Roberts rose stiffly from the pool that had formed about him in the night and stood, blue-lipped and shaking, over the Captain, whose tortured leg would not permit him to do more than raise himself on one elbow. The two officers faced the situation together. They needed no words. All about them lay the forest of that deadly central valley. Somewhere beyond it, unattainably far for the majority of the men, rose the western rampart of the island. For thirty-six hours they had had no food but hell-apples, the fever was

growing on them, and three-fourths of the command, any doctor would have said, could not march a mile.

The Captain spoke at last, staring sullenly at the ground. "Call the men, will you?" he asked. "H'm. I reckon it's time to split."

Roberts' face brightened. "I'll make it out all right," he declared. "Never felt huskier in my life. I could break world's records from here to a plate of grub."

Only ten men of the seventeen who were left responded to the call. The others, roused from the stupor of deep sleep, merely stared up vacantly and muttered, so Roberts let them lie. "Boys," said Burrell, when they had formed a little circle round him, "'most of us need a lay-off. H'm. So we're goin' to rest up here for a couple of days and then push on slow. Mr. Roberts and a couple of you can plug ahead now, though, so's to have some grub cooked up to meet us. I reckon we'll raise a famine in Nalang. H'm. Roberts, who'll you take with you?"

Despite the lightness of the officer's tone, every man knew what he asked for, and as the subaltern's eyes swept round the circle, shrewdly weighing each man's serviceability,

shoulders squared and faces took on looks of quite ferocious good cheer.

"I seen you first, sir," Terry Clancy cried all at once, and stumbled to his feet.

"I've got a fine healthy appetite, myself," Sullivan remarked plaintively. "I'm with you for a sprint, Lieutenant."

"You're too old, Clancy," said Roberts kindly. "I want yearlings for this. And you, Sullivan," — his voice held good-natured condescension, as he glanced down at his own bulging chest and sturdy limbs, — "you're too spindly. You're liable to double up, any time."

At last he chose Red Hannigan and Peter Kelley, two men of his own kind, bull-necked, thick-limbed and heavy-shouldered. The Captain handed him one of the two tins of bacon. "We'll look for you back," he said, "long about — H'm — day after to-morrow. Or day after that. H'm."

The eyes of the officers glinted into each other. "Sure," said Roberts, gravely shaking his commander's hand. "Come along, you fellows."

Twelve days later a party from Nalang found Lieutenant Roberts, the first white man

to win across Samar, sitting contentedly on the beach in the sunshine, forty miles above the town, eating snails and aimlessly tossing the shells at what had been his feet. Red Hannigan and Peter Kelley were never found, for Roberts never could remember where they left him.

After the departure of the rescue party, apathy settled over the camp in the valley. The Captain straightened his bad leg and lay back with closed eyes. The others lay about him, dozing. Even the worst of the fever-victims only cried out occasionally. Beside the relief of not having to march, cold and wet and hunger and sickness were little things.

It was well on in the afternoon when Clancy was roused by a sound which puzzled him. Stumbling out of camp, he came upon a sight which struck him speechless.

Sullivan, sitting astride a mouldering log, was wrenching off strips of sodden bark and digging his fingers deep into the punky wood. Suddenly the meaning of it burst on Terry. "Quit that!" he cried. "Quit it, I tell you."

Sullivan, glancing up, had the grace to red-

den. Then he lowered his eyes, and resumed his pecking. "I don't care," he muttered defiantly. "I'm hungry enough to eat anything."

Clancy turned away. Presently, from behind a clump of undergrowth, there came the sound of ripping bark. For a while Sullivan, still busy, preserved discreet silence. But his grin broadened slowly, and at last he sang out, "Hi, Terry! Pick for the little white ones. The others has kind of soured, I reckon."

There was no answer. After a time another man limped out, watched Sullivan for a little, and soon the sounds of the chase rose from another secluded spot. There was no element of sociability in those meals as yet.

Then came a slow succession of days not so tremendously hard to bear, as the pangs of hunger faded into the milder discomfort of starvation, and the fever felled them one by one. Days so like each other that only the calendar notched in the grip of the Captain's revolver kept their count.

Each morning fewer of them were able to join Sullivan in the search for grubs and seed pods, and he began bringing them what spoil of the forest he could find. They took it un-

questioningly from his hand, those who were conscious, like children. Indeed, as the days passed, the rough fellows turned for all their needs to the man who had been their butt, and he never failed to meet their primitive wants. That lanky body of his held a surprising store of tough endurance, and he seemed fever-proof. As for his cheerfulness, it was inexhaustible.

Big Terry Clancy and the Captain were the last to yield to their weakness, refusing, gently, the food Sullivan brought them. Hard men as those of B were, not one of them, in his sane moments, spoke a word of discontent or of complaint during those days. I like to remember that of them, as I like to remember that I never heard an American regular soldier, traditional grumbler that he is, grumble when he had a reason for it.

On the fourth evening after the departure of Lieutenant Roberts, the tenth night out from Sabey and the fifth since they had eaten food for human beings, Sullivan was the only man left stirring in the camp. In spite of the rain — and I would have you read always to the torrential beat of a tropical downpour and the sougning of cold, damp-laden winds —

he had managed, with the last of the matches and the powder from half a dozen cartridges, to kindle a fire in a fallen trunk, and had kept it going, and had dragged his comrades round it. He sat beside the Captain, and presently, glancing down, he saw that the officer's eyes were fixed steadily on him. "Anything you want, sir?" he asked.

"How many of us," Burrell asked abruptly, "are what you could call fit?"

Sullivan surveyed the prostrate men about him. "Well," he said imperturbably, "I reckon there's me. And you."

"H'm," the Captain grunted, and even in his sickness his eyes brightened. "Then," he said, "I reckon it's up to — us. H'm."

For a moment he mused, and then he went on, "It's no use trying Nalang. Roberts tried that. But if some one could get back to Sabey I think some of the men would try —"

"The boys would get you out of hell, sir," said Sullivan gravely, "if you sent th'm word."

"Think so?" said Burrell. "H'm. Well, to-morrow you'd better send word to 'em." The Captain's eyes had a queer brightness as he stared at Sullivan, reading his face.

"H'm," he muttered at last, "if I ever *do* have to get a message out of there, I hope you'll be round to carry it."

Something in his tone dragged Sullivan toward him with suddenly blazing eyes. "Captain," he begged, demanding assurance from the man who was his deity, "do you mean that? No jollyin' now, sir. You sure think I can do it?"

"Think?" said the Captain. "H'm. I'm bankin' on you, Sullivan. I *know* you can do it."

"Then," said Sullivan blissfully, "by God, I will, sir."

Early as it was next morning when Sullivan rose for his start, he found the Captain's steady eyes on him. "You don't need your rifle," he said. "Nor your belt."

"I reckon not, sir," said Sullivan whimsically, "not for buggin'."

"You take that can of bacon out of my haversack," his officer continued. "I've saved it for this."

"I don't need it none, sir," said Sullivan, edging away. "There'd ought to be fine buggin' back along. An' hell-apples, I reckon."

"Take it," said Burrell shortly, and Sulli-

van yielded to the habit of obedience. He turned for his journey.

"Hold on," his officer commanded. "You're forgettin' something." He lifted a clawlike hand, and Sullivan gripped it for a minute in silence. He strode across the little opening to the beginning of the back trail. There he halted, turned, and hurled the tin of bacon at his commander. "You go to hell, sir," he shrilled defiantly. "I'll do fine, buggin'," — and he ran stumblingly down the trail.

The Captain twisted his head — it was the only movement he could make — and watched the retreating figure of the mutineer. "H'm," he muttered after it, and shut his eyes, to wait.

For the first few hours Sullivan, uplifted by the thought of his mission, went on at what seemed to him a tremendous pace. In reality his knees lifted jerkily, his feet came down flat and stiff, and his stride was that of a child. A giddiness, too, overtook him now and then, and a white mist drifted before his eyes. At such times the walls of the trail seemed to rush by in a blur of green, and

he had an exhilarating sense of rapid movement.

Long before noon he had covered the three miles and a half to the first camp on the back trail. There he hesitated. A temptingly crumbly log lay beside the trail, and his stomach was cramped with such hunger as he had not felt for days. But he halted only a moment. "Time enough to eat to-night," he muttered, and went on.

The afternoon was harder. The giddiness and the mist assailed him oftener, and several times, when the blankness became complete, he was roused by finding that his face had come into not ungentle contact with the ground. Once, doubling limply, he struck his face on his knee instead, and a cut lip gave him the pleasant salty taste of blood. Sharp pains of breathlessness stabbed his sides at intervals, and his heart had fits of throbbing suffocatingly. But he never halted as long as he could see. When the trail was only blackness in the night he sank down.

The rain and the light woke him to an accusing sense that it had long been day. He moved on at once. "I'll eat when I've made that up," he muttered, as the blur enclosed him.

That day was mostly blur until, along in the afternoon, his mind cleared suddenly. The ground sloped upward under his feet. A rocky, sparsely-wooded ridge rose above him. Remembrance tingled through him. "My cactus-farm!" he cried, in delighted recognition. "I'm gettin' almost there."

With his knees doubling under him, he clawed his way to the ridge, and a well-remembered landscape lay about him, dark billows of unbroken forest and a horizon of up-tumbled hills. The huge emptiness of it smote him like a blow and he turned to the old camp. The signs of human occupation, the remembrance of men who had spoken there and of the words they had said, comforted him wonderfully. "Here," he said, having fallen into a way of thinking aloud, "is where I *eat*. They'd ought to be fine buggin' here."

But the ridge was disappointingly bare of provender. Not a rotten log, not a seed pod, rewarded his toilsome search. At last, where a hanging corner of rock had sheltered it, he came upon a torpid colony of tiger-ants. He looked at them dubiously. "I wonder," he muttered, "if anybody ever *et* an ant? I reckon not. Don't seem to be much *to* th'm."

As he stirred the sluggish insects with a doubtful finger, one of them set its mandibles in his flesh. Sullivan's eyes lit with determination. "I'm hungrier'n you be, I reckon," he said gravely.

With the refreshing acidity of his experiment strong on his tongue, he rose at last, regretfully. "It would seem kind of home-like sleepin' here," he said. "But I reckon I'd better be gallopin' along." And he pushed on till once more darkness brought him merciful oblivion.

He woke to daylight with all his senses clear but one. He understood — there had been times when he forgot even that — that he was Sullivan, that behind him lay his comrades, starving, that before him the trail led to men who needed but a word, and that he had been chosen to take it. But his sense of time was gone. How long he had slept he could not guess. It might have been one night, or many. They might all have died behind him, those sick men and the Old Man who banked on him.

In torture at the uncertainty, he rose and stumbled forward again. After a while — it might have been an hour or many days — the

trail brought him to a torrential river. He recognized it dimly as the Sabey. They had come up it once, sometime, any time, walking in its rocky bed. Now its swirling waters covered the trail.

Painstakingly Sullivan collected his misty faculties. There was a general feeling of morning in the air. By night he must be at Sabey, he was convinced. He must hurry, therefore. A clear idea flashed across his mind. A raft! He must build a raft and hurry with the rushing river, since there was no more trail. He drew his heavy knife-bayonet and turned to the woods. After a while darkness shut down and stopped his work. But he had cut a good many poles.

The next thing he knew it was light again, so he dragged one of his poles to the river and dropped it in. It sank. Another and another did the same. When they touched the water they sank. When Sullivan understood that his poles would not float, he lost his steady hopefulness for the first time.

But after a while he turned wearily, and stumbled off along the rocky, overhanging banks of Sabey River. When he had walked dizzily a little distance, he fell and lay still.

A fall on that cutting volcanic rock was another matter from a fall on the trail. At last he recovered enough to stagger on for a few more steps. Then he fell again. That time he did not rise.

But the shock and the loss of blood cleared his head. At last he recognized his predicament. He was through. There was no bitterness in the thought. He had done his best, and failed. The torment of hurry was gone, and he lay and watched the foaming river and the overarching trees. "I can't do it," Sullivan told himself simply, and quit.

But suddenly his merciless self assailed him. "There's another way," it urged. "You *can* do it. Th' Old Man said so. Try it."

Weakly, half-sobbing, Sullivan obeyed the summons, and got to his knees. He put out a hand and planted it on the rock, drew up his knee toward it, and his body swayed forward. He put out his other hand, drew up his other knee, swayed forward again. He had gained a foot, at least.

"By God," shouted Sullivan's self to him exultantly, "you *can* do it! Try it again. You can't walk, but you can *crawl*, I reckon. Whoop-eee-ee! Hit her up!"

And Sullivan, obedient as always, hit her up.

And so at last, seventeen days from the time he left Sabey, he returned to it, a blind, gaunt, rain-beaten, silent, grimly crawling thing. He had almost reached the barracks when a soldier, hurrying through the rain, spied him and raised a shout. He revived for a moment when they lifted him, and opened his eyes.

"Back along," faltered the messenger. "Starvin'. Hurry up. God!" he sighed, and collapsed in their arms.

They carried him to the shack they called a hospital, and while the relief party gathered and went out, twenty silent men loaded down with rations, the post surgeon and his wife worked over him. Suddenly the girl broke down.

"Oh!" she cried. "Look at his poor hands and knees! Oh, Will, what did *that* to him?"

"What?" stuttered the young surgeon gruffly. "What! Why, the—the nervy son—son of a gun *walked* on 'em, God knows how far, that's all! Fill those water bottles, will you. And *hurry* up."

Two days later Sullivan opened his eyes, and stared wonderingly at the room, and the lamplight, and the *olla* hanging in the window, and the post surgeon's pretty wife, who sat beside his cot. At last his eyes rested on his own hands, shapeless in bandages. And as he looked at them his lips trembled, and he began to cry, weakly, like a child.

The post surgeon's wife thought she understood, and her own breath caught. She was very new to the Army, and she was trying to make a hero of Sullivan. "Poor fellow," she murmured, "I know they're bad. But we'll fix them up. Don't cry about them."

"I ain't c-cryin'!" Sullivan whispered, in tremulous indignation. "I'm l-laughin'. I reckon," he muttered, and a ripple of the old whimsicality swept across his face, "I must be about th' first man ever wore his hands to a blister, walkin'." The wonder of the thought held him entranced.

The girl thought he was light-headed. "Is there anything you'd like?" she asked soothingly.

Sullivan considered. "Salt," he announced emphatically. "I want salt. Ev'ry drop you've got in th' place. What're you lookin'

at? Salt's cheap enough, ain't it? Well, I want some. Seems like I hadn't had no salt f'r years."

How the relief party did its work is another story, and a brave one. It is hard to kill strong men by exhaustion, and, by the time Sullivan could walk a little, the Captain and the other rescued men were sitting up in bed. At last a day came when Burrell was permitted to have one visitor. "Send Sullivan," he ordered.

The lanky fellow shuffled in bashfully, and stood with averted eyes. "Glad to see you're back, sir," he muttered.

"Well," asked Burrell gruffly, "you can shake hands, can't you?"

Sullivan, grinning sheepishly, held up a muffled paw. "I reckon not, sir," he said.

"What's the matter with 'em?" the Captain demanded.

"Blistered th'm, sir," Sullivan responded with solemn joy. "Blistered th'm, walkin'."

"H'm," the Captain muttered. His eyes were burning into the man. "Sullivan," he said abruptly, "there's a can of bacon in my haversack that belongs to you."

Sullivan gulped. Discipline had him by the heels again. "Beg y' pardon, sir," he mumbled nervously. "I reckon I must a been sort of loco that day."

"Well," said the Old Man of B Company gravely, "maybe I'll let it go this time. But see it don't happen again. H'm."

CHAPTER X

THIS FORTUNE

This Fortune you speak of, tell me, what sort of creature is she, to have the good things of the world so in her hands? — *The Inferno of Dante Alighieri.*

THE second of my Argonauts was of quite another sort. Whatever graces of body and mind Nature has to give, she had given him — and he had wasted them. With his invincible and dauntless youth he might have been a companion for Cortez and stout Bernal Diaz, a Crusader, almost anything he chose, and he was — I borrow the phrase of a better man than I — a Camp-Follower of Fortune, a wasted man. The outskirts of the world are full of them. That such things can be, that men can be born so strong, so lovable, and then be wasted, seems to me the most inexplicable of the caprices of that Fortune which puzzled Dante Alighieri long ago.

Mid-heaven high, the morning sun blazed above the forlorn little lumber-port, calling the

inhabitants thereof to arise and make hay diligently during the few weeks it still had to shine before the change of monsoons and the rainy season blotted the world in mist. The call seemed to arouse little enthusiasm. Over the channel, where the Rio Bagalayag winds out by the bar, a pair of gulls wheeled aimlessly, plunging into the yellow water now and then, and rising with harsh cries. Out beyond them in the distance, where Point Bagalayag wavered in the heat, a lorchia drifted with limp sails, becalmed in the lee of Mount Bagalayag. In the one street of Bagalayag itself, the grassy lane which follows the curve of the shore, two Chinamen with a long whip-saw were gnawing a plank from a four-foot log of *molave*, sawing steadily with the patient endurance of their race, brown arms swinging in and out, brown bodies swaying. At the end of each stroke, they grunted rhythmically, and the music of their industry — *Ugh! Kch-chee-e-e-Arghh! Kch-chee-e-e-Ugh!* — was the only sound in Bagalayag that morning, save the raucous complaint of the distant gulls.

As a matter of fact, Bagalayag was waiting in hushed expectancy for something inevitable to happen. On the shady side of the nipa

church, which still manages to rear its rickety walls at the corner of the brown and weedy *plaza*, the populace was gathered — forty-one men, fifty-two women, fifty-two babes in arms, and seventy-three children of varying sex and age, speechless for once, with the smoke of their cigarettes dissolving above them like unfragrant incense. And the gaze of all that multitude was fixed unwinkingly on a tin-roofed house — the only one in town — which stands on the other side of the street, close to the water's edge.

In that pretentious dwelling an unprecedented event seemed likely to happen, for in its upper chamber one of the lords of the earth lay deathly sick of a fever. Bagalayag as yet recorded no death of a white man in its simple annals, therefore it sat and smoked and waited, all except its stolid, alien Chinamen, who cared nothing for life or death or anything but planks.

Occasionally a voice floated out from the Tin-Roofed House, weak and thin but full of helpless rage, and at the sound the inhabitants of Bagalayag wagged their heads and spoke softly. "The Señor Ess-sofftí is not dead — yet," they murmured.

In Hamburg, far enough from Bagalayag in miles, there is a house which sells anything, from elephants to orchids. Every product of the animal or vegetable kingdom from one pole to the other, 'round with the equator and back again, is included in the complete line which the *Hamburgische Gesellschaft* carries, for this body is a true body whose busy nerve-ends net the round world. Men on grimy ships whose battered fore feet are set across uncharted leagues of sea, men who rot in unheard-of towns — yet continue to live and trade in defiance of every hygienic law — men who plod untracked continents and unknown, sleeping islands with savage followers, are the organs by which it acts.

Set above all these is the good Right Eye of the Company, the man who, by virtue of wild-wood lore and craftsmanship, and first-hand knowledge of the far nooks and byways of the earth, by right of energy and perseverance, outranks the army of traders and collectors and stands next the Brain. Herr Felix Schrofft is his name, always spoken with respect and envy by his associates and rivals in his strong man's calling. And now, become the Señor Ess-soffti on liquid Malay tongues,

he lay alone at bay in the Tin-Roofed House, and held the breathless attention of the populace of Bagalayag in Mindoro.

The arena where he fought, that small, bare, upper chamber, was very simply furnished with a round table, a couple of chairs, a camphor-wood chest, a bamboo cage imprisoning a parrot, and a folding cot upholstered in the severest taste with dingy gray canvas. The table held the fly- and lizard-bitten remnants of a meal, the chairs were draped with the muddy garments their owner had flung there hastily three days before, a litter of other clothing sprawled from beneath the lid of the chest, and on the cot, which stood before a seaward-facing window, was stretched the redoubtable Señor Ess-sofftí himself, not at all in the mental attitude which our Christian convention prescribes for those *in articulo mortis*. Despite the pallor of the cheeks beneath the smut of the newly sprouted beard and the yellow gleam of the eyeballs and the leaden inertness of the shrunken limbs which barely hollowed the taut canvas where they lay, the shaggy, wizened monkey of a man was plainly beset by the very worst of tempers,

which only his extreme weakness kept from violent expression.

So he lay chafing there that morning, just as he had lain for days. Occasionally his restless eyes met the beady ones of the parrot, and the imprisoned bird shrieked with silly laughter. On such occasions the Señor Ess-sofft shook his fist, a menace which showed mostly in the convulsions of his face, and muttered weakly, "Sing, you deffel, sing!" falling thereafter into a murmured torrent of words, as he consigned the Philippine Islands and all things in them to everlasting torment.

Even a hidebound moralist, knowing all the circumstances, might have found some palliation for Herr Schrofft's unspiritual estate. Fever had stricken him at an inopportune season, and, for the first time in his life, he faced a possibility of failure with which he could not cope. Even now the freighter *Sarstoon* had turned her stubby nose Mindoro-ward at Schrofft's suggestion. In ten days she would be lying off Bagalayag, waiting for the cargo he had promised her, and even when one has no fever, ten days are little time in which to fell and trim a hundred cubic meters of a wood so dense that it eats an axe like granulated

metal, and float it down the miles of oozing mud they call the Rio Bagalayag, and load it before the northeast monsoon — already threatening in the clouds — comes to lash the open roadstead into a fury of spume and breaking rollers.

He could foresee it all, the excessive sympathy of the *Sarstoon's* skipper, the meek explanation of the House to the impatient customer, the commiseration and sly elation of his acquaintances and rivals that he had failed at last, the universal grunt of "Hard luck, Schrofft" — hard luck in a trade whose frankly brutal creed discredits a man for one adverse stroke of fortune as for any other sign of personal weakness and unfitness. All that must come, unless he could find some means of thwarting Dame Fate. And so, not finding the means, he cursed the officious bel-dame heartily.

Suddenly he noticed that the drone of the saw had ceased. Doubtless the coolies had stopped to wipe their streaming faces, but Schrofft was in no mood to seek excuses for them. "Loaf, you deffels, loaf!" he shouted venomously.

As if in response to his taunt, the music of

the saw began again, but mingled with it came the chatter of many voices and the soft flop, flop of many padding feet. Raising his head a wearisome half-inch to peer from his window, Herr Schrofft saw, with supreme disgust, the sprung masts and frowsy rigging of the monthly packet from Batangas in the river. Somehow or other the hours had dragged by uncounted; it was afternoon, and the crazy lorchas had drifted to her haven in spite of calm and childish seamanship; while he, Herr Schrofft the indomitable, had one day less in which to do his work. For the first time in his illness, the hard-pressed little man groaned for sympathy, and pitying, sentimental, Teutonic tears burned his eyes. "If I only had just one white man with me," he muttered.

The confusion without came nearer, drawing down the street, and presently the stairs of the Tin-Roofed House clattered under booted feet and its fabric trembled slightly. The invalid's face brightened with curiosity. No native of the Philippines has the combined weight and energy necessary to make a house shake when he walks. *Deus ex Machina!* That was a favorite phrase of Schrofft's, almost the only Latin of Gymnasium days that

had stuck. Perhaps the Man had come with the Hour. Schrofft watched the door with feverish intentness.

It opened and a white man entered, white at least in fundamental coloring, although his skin was a raw, beefy red from newly acquired sunburn, tall, broad-shouldered, clad serviceably in sombrero, the relic of an army shirt, the ruins of khaki riding-breeches and, most incongruously, a pair of handsome riding-boots, whose russet leather was cleaned and polished till it glittered. So far all was well, but the face — the hollowed cheeks, the dark puffy rims beneath the eyes, the wavering glance of the bright blue eyes themselves, the nervous twitching of the full red lips, set in a smile of deprecating impudence, the keen, high-bred features blunted and battered by dissipation, all spoke of one thing. Schrofft sized up his visitor with narrowed lids, and spoke his opinion briefly. "I haf no use for bums," he said.

Like a mask, the wheedling smirk dropped from the newcomer's face. "Hock the Kaiser, a wandering Dutchman!" he cried airily, advancing to the cot.

Schrofft's little eyes burned red. "I am

Herr Felix Schrofft, Explorer for the *Hamburgische Gesellschaft*," he said with dignity, "and I haf no use for bums. Get out."

"'Tis a certain matter of delayed remittances," the stranger explained, as he uncere-
moniously dumped the encumbering garments
from a chair, and sat down by the table. "I
must identify myself, Herr Softy. I am Rich-
ard Roe, Esquire, ward of the famous John
Doe, of whom you may have heard. While
the remittances delay, I wander, seeking whom
and what I may devour." Mr. Richard Roe
gazed ruefully at the dusty viands before
him. "As usual, I seem to have come to the
wrong shop," he murmured. "But here at
least are cigarettes. I will not stand on cere-
mony."

While the match flared, Schrofft stared at
his tormentor with at least as much of bewil-
derment as of wrath. "If I could hold my
revolver," he said at last, "I think I would
shoot you. I haf no use for bums."

Through a cloud of smoke, Mr. Richard
Roe gazed whimsically at the invalid. "The
question seems to be," he suggested mildly,
"whether the bum has a use for you. And
I rather think he has." He crossed one leg

over the other and became pleasantly didactic. "I am not always what you see me now, Herr Softy. One short week ago I sat in Don Miguel Rafferty's establishment in Batangas, wooing fickle Fortune at the wheel. The jade stripped me, I was sold out, up against it; so I became a thorough bum, in manners, morals, and in dress. The boots," he digressed, glancing complacently at his well-shod feet, "are somewhat out of character, I admit. Otherwise I am a bum pure and simple, as you have three times observed, but a bum of a quality of which you never dreamed, a masterless man reduced to his primal elements, three appetites and a sense of humor. Herr Softy, beware of me. I am a dangerous character, I warn you frankly at the start."

Mr. Richard Roe approached the cot once more. "Speaking of revolvers," he remarked, "reminds me that I left my own in Batangas, in care of Uncle Monte de Piedad." He drew Schrofft's weapon from beneath the pillow, and inspected it rapidly. "A poor thing, but a Colt's," he muttered. "Calibre 41, of course. How European!"

Herr Schrofft, his eyes still closed, groaned

weakly. It was hard that his respectable and well-ordered brain should conjure up a nightmare of vagabondage like this, and supply fitting words for the figure.

"I came southward to Mindoro," the drawling voice went on, "and at the first stroke I am half a man again. I have a gun. Here is a Tin-Roofed House in which to sleep; here is tobacco to smoke; through the chinks in the floor I perceive sleeping chickens which promise food. Best of all, I find here a companion for my solitude. Herr Softy, you may need an heir before long. Behold him here in me."

"*Herr Gott!*" Schrofft groaned again, "I am going crazier every minute." Suddenly he opened his eyes, for the door swung on its hinges and a head surmounted by a shock of coarse black hair was thrust within. At the sight of it, all his aggressiveness returned. "Son of fifty fathers!" he screamed. "Because you think I am dying you run away, and now you have the shamelessness to come back! Go and be a *muchacho* for the deffel! I shall not die; in two days I shall be strong enough to kill you."

"It was only his canny Filipino way," Mr.

Richard Roe broke in, coming to the rescue of the unfaithful servant. "He wanted an alibi for the inquest. Slave," he announced sternly, "I have saved your life. Fetch more cigarettes and a bottle of whatever burning water the market offers. Then kill three chickens and cook them with plenty rice — and no grease. The Señor Softy and I will have a mucho grande chow-chow to celebrate my home-coming. I am his heir. *Sigue! Pronto! Madili!*"

Schrofft glared hopelessly at Mr. Richard Roe. "Then you are real!" he cried. "That boy, he sees you also, he hears you, he obeys! *Mein Gott!* You are a bum. You haf no home, you haf no money, you haf no grub, you haf no chob. And I would gif a hundert dollars for just one *man!*"

"Alas," said Mr. Richard Roe hollowly, "I am not a man, and the hundred is unclaimed. I am the stuff that dreams are made of, bad dreams. But I have my better impulses, and I feel them stirring at the prospect of food. I will be a ministering angel to you, an airy, fairy, army nurse, pressing my cool hand softly on your fevered brow." He suited the action to the word, save that the hand was

hot and gritty. "Herr Softy, your pulse is rapid, your temperature is rising, you tremble on the verge of a paroxysm of fever. Where is the quinine?"

The recurrent hot stage of his disease had indeed seized the patient, and as it grew upon him he lost more and more his grip of reality under the mad contradictions of Mr. Richard Roe's speech and conduct, and the potent spell of the drug which he administered with a lavish hand. Dimly, as in a dream, the room stretched wider and higher about him, and as the pulse boomed and roared in his ears, he saw in the distance a phantasm which he knew was called Mr. Richard Roe, sitting at a table and going through the motions of a real man. It drank thirstily from a bottle which a frightened *muchacho* brought; it smoked endless cigarettes; it dismembered a steaming chicken with its fingers, and ate it daintily, ate another, stretched back in its chair and grunted with content. Phantom or reality, Mr. Richard Roe began to be a comfort, he made himself so much at home. Schrofft closed his eyes and dozed.

Suddenly through his slumber cut a well-remembered sound: *Ugh! Kch-chee-e-e-*

Arghh! Kch-chee-e-e-Ugh! He woke to a moment of clear-headedness and the sense of his predicament. It was almost sunset; only eight days were left. "My trees, my trees!" he quavered, trying weakly to sit up. "I must go and get them."

Instantly the "cool hand" rested on his forehead and, not unkindly, he was shoved back on his pillows. "You've been dozing," the voice of Mr. Richard Roe explained soothingly. "What's the matter?"

Brokenly, still as in a dream, Schrofft heard his own voice go croaking on, speaking ramblingly of trees, always of trees. The clump of iron-woods that grow at the corner where the mangroves are thickest on the bank, thirty miles up-stream. The twelve huge trees that stand up so high and have their tops pleached together. Those were the ones; they must be cut without delay. He must start at once, because, you see, the *Sarstoon* would be in on the 18th, and, if she didn't get the trees, the monsoon would change. And then her voyage would be wasted, and the customer would not have for six more months the wood of unique density which he wanted for non-magnetic gears, and the House would have to

bear the blame, when it was all the fault of a fool named Schrofft, who lay around with fever when there was work to do.

At a great distance he saw Mr. Richard Roe sitting with crossed legs, smoking in long, meditative puffs, and inspecting him narrowly with keen, unwavering blue eyes.

"You're a rather game little man," said Mr. Richard Roe approvingly. After a long time he spoke again. "Thirty miles up, you say. Is there any one around who knows an iron-wood when he sees one?"

There was a new, a compelling quality in the voice, which Schrofft had not heard before. "That coward *muchacho*, that Juan, he knows. He has been there with me," said Schrofft.

"And the tools, where are they?" asked the compelling tones.

"In the canoes, all ready," Schrofft answered obediently.

"I can't understand his getting so excited about a few trees," Mr. Richard Roe muttered. "*I* never could. But he's a game little man, and if he wants his trees as bad as all this, by Jove, he's got to have 'em." He rose lazily, and stood towering above the cot. "It's all

right, Schrofft. Go to sleep. I'll have your trees here by the eighteenth."

"You can't," Schrofft objected sleepily, with the unmalicious frankness of one who states a well-established fact. "You're nothing but a bum."

"Go to sleep," Mr. Richard Roe repeated soothingly. "Perhaps, since there's so much hurry, I'd better start to-night. There's a lovely moon now, like a Swiss cheese. Last night it made me think of beer."

"Those trees on the right bank," Schrofft muttered, trying to rise once more.

Strong hands pressed him back and held him there. "Schrofft," Mr. Richard Roe said slowly and impressively, "pay attention just one minute, and then you can go to sleep. When I want anything I go and get it, *sabe?* Same as I came here and got grub. Same as I'd go to the devil for a drink, when I want *that*. I never happened to want trees, but I'll get some for you. Now go to sleep."

Under the spell of the assuring voice and the comforting grip of the strong hands on his shoulders, Schrofft's eyelids drooped lower and lower, till even the clatter of energetic

feet descending the stairs did not cause them to flutter.

He must have dreamed still more then, for strange things happened. Outside in the village, even in peaceful Bagalayag, a riot rose, voices of men angry and protesting, voices of women tearful and imploring, voices of children shrill with excitement, and, dominating all, a languid, vibrant voice speaking sometimes in English, sometimes in Spanish, sometimes in crude but vigorous Bisayan, threatening, cajoling, domineering. Gradually all the others died away into a murmur of resignation, and then, suddenly, the song of the saw stopped with a spluttering drawl not unlike the squawk of a frightened hen. "Come along, you chaps," said the masterful voice. "Got a job for you other place, *sabe?*"

The response slid in falsetto semitones from a Mongolian tongue. "Got plenty worl-luk this side," it said sullenly. "No can do."

"Sure can do," said the master. "Got to do, *sabe?* Come along, you beggars, before I tie your pigtails together."

Then gradually all the tumult ceased, and restful quiet enveloped the Tin-Roofed House and endured so long that Schrofft craftily

opened his eyes a crack, and gazed about his chamber. It was quite empty. The heavy lids drooped once more, and he fell into a deep, untroubled sleep. And as he slept, the cooling sweat bathed his worn body. Together, the quinine and the excitement of the day had conquered his disease; the fever was broken.

The first impression borne in on Schrofft's consciousness when he woke next morning, sufficiently clear in mind, but weak beyond belief in body, was that Bagalayag was uncommonly quiet, even for Bagalayag. The droning saw was silent; there was no rustle of bare feet on the grassy ways, no low murmur of gossip from sleepy tongues, no straw-muffled booming of rice mortars, no whine of carabao or shriek of wooden axle-boxes as the *tuba* was brought in from the palm-grove. For a moment he lay with an empty mind. Then Memory returned. "*Himmel!*" he muttered. "I did not dream it *all!*"

At the sound, a doddering old man rose from the corner and approached the cot. "Does the señor want anything?" he asked.

"Where is everybody?" Schrofft demanded. "Where is Juan?"

"They are all gone," the old man replied.

"Only I am left behind. The Señor Duque took them all."

"The Señor Duque took them all!" Schrofft echoed. Dukes are rare in Mindoro.

"Si, señ-o-or. El Duque de la Calle Milochentaitres in America. He took them all, the men, the boys, the Chinese pigs who saw; all Bagalayag but me — because I am very old. Only I am left, and the women and children who hide in the houses to pray. They go to cut down trees, all the trees in Mindoro, I think. It is an order from Ouashingtone. The Señor Duque says so."

The Duke of 1083rd Street in America! Decidedly, if Schrofft had been delirious, all Bagalayag now outdid him in delusion.

"Does the señor want anything?" the old man repeated. "If we had guessed that the señor had el Duque de la Calle Milochentaitres for a friend, we would not have left him alone to be sick. It was very wicked, but the Duque says he will forgive us if we get the trees."

At the mention of trees, Schrofft's lips had contracted. But his mind, as unstrung as his body, was at the mercy of every emotional catspaw that ruffled it, and the childlike awe

and faith in the voice of the old man brought a long-forgotten sensation clutching at his diaphragm. "We have been very wicked; but the Duke says he will forgive us if we get the trees." For all his weakness, Schrofft chuckled a little at the audacity of it. An unwonted feeling of dependence took hold of the self-reliant little man. He combated it feebly. "He cannot do it; he is only a bum," Reason urged. But the protest of Reason was purely formal, and triumphant Cheerfulness retorted, "He can do anything — when he wishes to."

"What would the señor like for breakfast?" the old man's voice broke in. "He may have six little oysters, or two eggs passed through water, or a cup of milk with one egg in it, or a very small fish not fried — the Duque says to fry is not good for sick ones — but cooked on a sharp stick, as He Himself taught me."

Once more Schrofft relaxed in the new and comfortable sense of utter dependence. "Oysters," he murmured unctuously, and gave himself up to the anticipation of the plump, brassy-flavored morsels which were soon to cool his throat. *Deus ex Machina!* A God

from the Machine of Things had taken his affairs in hand.

As the days wore on, the words became more than a mere phrase. In the long, lazy, roseate hours which a convalescent knows, Schrofft thought much, and the well-timed arrival of the mysterious Mr. Richard Roe at the crisis of his illness and his fortunes, the unbelievable eccentricity of the man, the nonchalant confidence with which he had undertaken a task in which he had no part either by interest or training, all combined to rouse in Schrofft's mind that superstition which is so fundamental an element in all us Aryans. The manifestation took the guise of Hero-Worship. An unreasoning faith in Mr. Richard Roe got hold of him.

The atmosphere in which he lived strengthened the conviction. Mr. Roe was absent only in the body; the power of his masterful personality still moulded life and thought in Bagalayag. The blear-eyed, tottering attendant he had left for Schrofft, anxious, fussy, mentally helpless, had one warrant for all his load of troublesome attentions: "The Señor Duque told me to do it."

As Schrofft grew stronger, and strolled out

into the village, he found its people under the same spell. Women and children had gradually stolen out from the shacks; one by one they took up their daily occupation; the pattering of their anxious prayers was no longer one of the street-sounds of Bagalayag; they asked Schrofft trustingly, "When will the Duque bring our husbands back?"

And Schrofft answered just as trustingly, "On the eighteenth."

Dimly he felt the thrill of the contrast, saw primeval Nature and the lean, sardonic American face each other, and felt no doubt of the outcome. Many times, as the slow days passed, he looked away to the black mantle of forest which clothed all the land to the south, close-fitting and unbroken up to the rough crest of Mount Bagalayag itself. "He'll do it," he repeated continually.

And Mr. Richard Roe did do it. On the evening of the seventeenth, a shrill clamor of women's voices ran through the town, and their owners gathered on the river bank to meet an unwieldy raft that was warping in on the brown and sluggish current. The huge sullen logs seemed bound to sink, in spite of the bulk of chambered bamboo which buoyed

them, but standing springily erect on their backs, Mr. Richard Roe dominated the raft as he did all things else. When it grounded, he swung himself to the shoulders of two of his men and was borne triumphantly ashore.

"By Jove, Schrofft," was his greeting, "glad to see you looking that way." He flipped a hand behind him, and added casually, "There are your trees," and that was all of the little epic of the forest which Schrofft ever heard from his lips, except for fragments which he tossed out to laugh at. But from the tales which the restored husbands and fathers of Bagalayag chattered to their families, he gathered a picture of heart-breaking toil and endurance, and cheerful, laughing resourcefulness which filled him with a yearning admiration for its central figure.

That night, had Mr. Richard Roe so chosen, he might have become hereditary lord of Bagalayag in Mindoro, and laughed at the law, the Constitution and the flag, schoolhouses, benevolent assimilation, and human progress. Like a travel-worn, unshaven monarch, he sat in Schrofft's long cane chair, puffing contentedly at Schrofft's cherished china pipe, while the unfaithful servant Juan knelt at his feet

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and revived the tarnished glories of the shining boots, and his primitive worshippers poured in a stream of tribute, herbs of the field and fruits, fish and flesh and fowl, indigestible sweets and death-dealing drinks of home manufacture. On all alike he smiled kindly yet wearily, with the affable condescension of one who by divine right might be severe, yet chooses to be kind. But once his smile broadened into feeling.

"You won't find Lame Duck and Gouty Hen bringing me any thanks for stringing 'em that way," he remarked to Schrofft, who sat in the background, as proud as the mother of one chicken.

"Lame Duck and Gouty Hen?" Schrofft echoed, puzzled.

"My untamed Chinks," the Duke of 1083rd Street explained. "That was a stroke of genius, taking them. They did the work, while the Filipinos did the kicking. We sawed the trees down, you know — may not be the way to do it, but we *did* it — and we three took turns —"

"Lame Duck and Gouty Hen!" Schrofft spluttered with delight. "*Himmel!* Such names!" Then he became serious. "How

can I pay you! When you come I say to you, 'I would gif a hundert dollars for a man,' and you *are* a man, the finest I efer — "

"That's all right," said Mr. Richard Roe benevolently. "It was good sport. I wouldn't work that hard for money."

"Of course there's the — the other side too — " Schrofft stumbled over his words, bashful as a maiden with her lover. "I cannot thank you. You save my life, you save my reputation, you — "

"Cut out the thanks, Schrofft," Mr. Roe interrupted, with a touch of smiling haughtiness. "I don't like 'em. You'd better be clearing out now," the weary monarch added to his thronging admirers. "You're nice little brown men enough, but I'm sleepy. *Sigue Dagupan*, the whole bunch."

Two mornings later, after breakfast, Herr Schrofft again brought up the subject of Mr. Richard Roe's reward. In the intervening day the *Sarstoon* had come and gone with her hard-won load, and Schrofft's admiration for his miraculous helper had grown exceedingly. With the passion for work still on him, Mr. Richard Roe had been everywhere, and everywhere had been effective, on the beach, in the



canoes, on the *Sarstoorn's* deck and in her hold, even on her bridge.

Mingled with the boundless admiration, was another feeling which filled Schrofft with confusion, while it opened a vista to the sky-line of his lonely life. Since young Erich Schmidt was killed before his eyes, twenty years gone in Africa, he had wanted no friend, no bunkie, *kein Kamerad*. But now — Mr. Richard Roe sat across his table irresistibly reminiscent of some wandering, *roué* god, who needed but a whiff of Olympian air to refreshen his eternal youth. Sun and wind and work had erased the signs of dissipated strength, sleep had rubbed out the aging lines of work, and now he sat in the *sala* of the Tin-Roofed House lean, brown, and hard, with his rumpled yellow hair and trace of yellow beard, and sparkling eyes half smiling at Life and Fate — not defiantly or deprecatingly, but with the faint amusement one may find in the vagaries of equals one knows well.

Mingled emotions made expression difficult for Schrofft, and he gave speech its most practical form. "Here is the hundert," he said gruffly, and pushed a chunky little bag across. "It don't pay you, nothin' efer can —"

"The hundred?" Mr. Richard Roe stared at the bag as if surprised, but he drew it to him. "Oh, yes. I'll take it if you like, Schrofft, of course. Much obliged." As he weighed it in his hand, his eyes darkened suddenly, and the under lids drew tight, as if he were gazing at something far away over the blue water which lay before him. Almost unconsciously he untied the cord that bound it, and a little stream of gold ran chinking out. "Yellow ones," Mr. Roe muttered.

"It's not much," Schrofft said apologetically, "but — What are you going to do now?"

Still unconsciously, Mr. Roe's long supple fingers had arranged the heap into four little orderly piles, and he was shoving them back and forth, like counters in some game. "Four stacks of blue ones," he muttered.

"What will you do now?" Schrofft repeated.

"Eh?" said Mr. Richard Roe. "Oh, yes. What'll I do? Well, Schrofft, I never bother to plan that out far ahead."

"I'll tell you," said Schrofft, gathering head for a flood of speech, "you stay with me. I — I called you a bum once. I take it back.

You're all right. The quickness to decide, the way to make everything do what you want, the good luck, you have it all!"

"If I *did* have luck," Mr. Roe muttered thoughtfully, "that'd be enough to clean out Rafferty's bank. By Jove, I'll do it. I'll play the twelve."

"You come with me," Schrofft urged. "You are young, you have had your fling; now it's time to settle down. I'll help you, I'll be — what-you-call? — the balance w'heel. I teach you all I know, and in two three year you'll be the boss of us all. You'll have a chob better'n mine."

He hesitated, for Mr. Roe was gazing at him with a whimsical smile. "Go ahead, Schrofft," he said. "What kind of a job is yours? What do you get out of it?"

"Ten thousand mark a year, *und* expenses," said Schrofft, uneasy for some mockery to come.

"Ten thousand marks! That's twenty-five hundred dollars," Mr. Roe commented. "*And* expenses. That's a lot of money, Schrofft. But I live simply; my expenses wouldn't be high enough to make it pay. So I'll just go

back to Batangas and play the twelve. Twelve trees, you know."

Desperately, imploringly, Schrofft argued with him, dangled larger and juicier bait before his eyes. "You might be a partner in the House!" he cried. But Mr. Roe remained unmoved, even at that dazzling prospect, and at last Schrofft lost his temper.

"You *are* a bum," he shouted angrily. "It's chust what I say before. You haf no home, no food, no chob, no money, and —" he finished helplessly, "*Mein Gott!* You do not care!"

"Money could not buy the glorious uncertainty I enjoy," Mr. Roe replied pleasantly. "Calm down, Schrofft. I'm going out to tell 'em to get a canoe ready for me."

Late that afternoon he left, with his tattered clothing and his shining boots and his little bag of gold, and his smile, which he shed benignantly on the worshippers who thronged the beach. Only three residents of all Bagalayag were missing. Down the street Lame Duck and Gouty Hen stolidly made up lost time — *Ugh! Kch-chee-e-e-Arggh! Kch-chee-e-e-Ugh!* And up in the *sala* of the Tin-Roofed House a shaggy little man, his back

resolutely turned to the window and the leave-taking, puffed savagely at a big china pipe, and exploded every now and then: "Chust a bum! A good-for-nothin' bum!" But when the sun was gone and all the shadows on the mountain had thickened into one, he laid down the pipe and went to the window and gazed out long over the darkening sea. "My poor little bum god from the machine," he said wistfully. "Now I must forget him."

It was not so easy to forget Mr. Richard Roe. The memory of him clung to Schrofft even after his work was done in Mindoro, and he had bidden Bagalayag an everlasting farewell. In Manila, Mr. Richard Roe's image dogged his busy footsteps, and when at last he climbed the side of the *Rosetta Maru*, bound for Hongkong and home, Mr. Roe was at the surface of his thoughts. "*Mein Gott!*" Schrofft mused, as he leaned on the rail that first night out and saw Bolinao looming faintly in the gulf of blackness, far to leeward, "he saved my life, and now I leave him in the Philippines."

He leaned there, absorbed in a vision of the companionship which could never be, till the last shadow of the islands had faded in

the night. Then brusquely, as if he awakened himself, he turned forward to the smoking-room and the nightcap of rum and lime-juice which was his concession to the luxury of rest. "My poor little bum god," he muttered, "if he was here, I'd buy him a drink. He's had too many drinks already, though, poor deffel."

At the door of the smoking-room he stopped abruptly. "Butterflies," he grunted in disgust, and turned aside to a settee which stood near in the shadow, to wait for his drink till they were done. And then, suddenly, he leaned forward and gazed into the brightly lighted room, for a voice there had set all his nerves aquiver. "*So?*" he muttered incredulously. "*Kann nicht sein!*"

Inside the room three men were sitting at a little table with a bottle between them, all dressed alike in spotless and unrumpled linen. Their likeness ended with their dress. One was a boy, the down still soft on his chin, but his cheeks were pasty and he had the dead eyes of an evil old man. The second was a flabby man of middle age, whose red face was an expressionless mask, from behind which he looked out watchfully. And the third, bril-

liant, flashing, shedding a glow of life and strength around him, was Mr. Richard Roe in a new guise.

"How'd you clean up over here this time, Billy?" asked the boy in a dry, professional tone.

"Well enough," Mr. Richard Roe answered. "Went on my uppers once, down in Mindoro."

"I travel on 'em all the time," said the wan youth. "Never saw such luck as I have."

"Get a mascot, Mike," Mr. Richard Roe advised mockingly. "That's what I did. Finest little mannikin of a mascot the Luck Machine ever ground out. Found a little Dutchman down there—down on *his* luck, sick, almost crying for some trees he'd got to cut or lose his job or his reputation or something. I got 'em for him. The little beggar was so glad he gave me a hundred, and I played it on the twelve at Rafferty's—there were twelve trees—and the twelve came. They wouldn't let me bet again, so I came up to Manila."

"Hell," said the aged young man apathetically, "what's thirty-six hundred? I could cash up that myself."

"And," said the other man, speaking through motionless lips, "the lucky devil struck Manila just when that tin-horn Haines had sold a mine down Mindanao way. Haines got to working his bellows out to the Country Club, wanting to back the wheel, no limit, and Billy took him up and played the twelve, and the twelve came up — twice running. That's all."

The aged young man stared at Mr. Richard Roe with dropped jaw. "Good Lord!" — his voice was an awe-struck whisper — "that's over a million!"

"Considerably over, theoretically," Mr. Richard Roe agreed, smiling coolly at the disconcerted young man. "Unfortunately, Mr. Haines couldn't cash it all, so I took his notes for everything but a goodly number of thou's. You may have the notes if you'd like 'em, Mike. I've got all I want. And get a mascot."

The aged young man went off into a stream of oaths. "Where are you goin' now, Billy?" he asked at last. "Goin' — home?" His voice dropped as he spoke the tabooed word, and for a moment, through the lines with which greed and cunning and indulgence had

marked him, the face of a wistful, heart-sick youngster came out dimly.

"*And a wife, and a baby?*" said Mr. Roe, smiling whimsically. "No, thank you, Mike. I'm going over to Siam and buy a small tin-mine. It's a thing I've always wanted. I may breed a line of white elephants on the side." Abruptly, as if a sudden thought had come to him, he rose and filled the glasses, emptying the bottle. "Gentlemen," he cried, holding his glass aloft, "I ask for bottoms up. To the Señor Ess-sofft, the prince of mascots. May he live long and die busy." The glasses clinked and were emptied. Mr. Roe set his on the table. "Good night, gentlemen," he said, and departed.

But his progress was soon interrupted. Blinded by the sudden darkness of the deck, he lost his way, and was nearly sent sprawling by the legs of a man who sat huddled on a settee, a shabby little man, even in the dark. "What the devil," Mr. Roe began, with lofty displeasure. He checked himself. "I beg your pardon, I'm sure," he said with the elaborate courtesy of one who, having the divine right to be insolent, yet chooses to be kind.

Shrinking as at a blow, the shabby little

man drew in his legs. Even in the gloom the movement had an appealing humbleness about it that went to the ready sympathy of Mr. Richard Roe. "It's all right, old chap," he said. "No harm done. Good night."

The shabby little man mumbled something inarticulate, and Mr. Roe, immaculate, self-sufficient, free from care, strode on and left his mascot staring blindly out at the dim, jumbled waters flashing by. "What luck!" the mascot mumbled to the waters, after a long time. And then again, "What luck!"

CHAPTER XI

MCGENNIS'S PROMOTION

My third adventurer was of still another type, a young man, a boy, if you like, who was fresh and unsullied in body and mind and heart, with life all before him. The opponents he fought with were all inside himself, and of the worth of what he won you shall judge for yourselves.

Within a minute or two of six o'clock that morning the sun rose, and it was broad, staring day. One instant the world was smothered in a damp, impenetrable, almost tangible grayness; the next, its nakedness lay discovered in a glare of light.

There was a sea of limpid lukewarm water heaving slowly; a ribbon of beach, metallic-white; a tangle of untended, unproductive vegetation; a village equally untended and unproductive, except of unnecessary babies,

where listless brown people moved without much purpose, or, lacking the ambition even to make a show of activity, lolled where they were.

The tropical sun had no magic of half-lights to tinge it all with romance or stir it into fugitive beauty. Such as Sicaba was at heart, it stood revealed.

When the sun rose, John McGennis rose too, and stood for a moment, unshivering in the lukewarm air, to look down on the poverty of his town, before he turned to pour water over himself out of an old tomato-can.

Like the morning and the sea and the air, the water had no tang in it, and McGennis, drying himself slowly and methodically, felt no fresher for his bath. When a youthful and well-tempered body fails to respond to the caress of sluicing water, there is generally something wrong with the mind which inhabits it. There was with the mind of McGennis.

The trouble lay outside his window. That compound of staring sky and sea and stared-at village which the day revealed had overwhelmed him. As mere geological and botanical facts, Sicaba, Pagros, the Tropics, had proved too big for him. They made of him

just a spot of life, meaningless as an ant toiling unendingly in the forest of the grass-stems. Tiny dot of intelligence that he found himself, in the midst of those triumphant physical forces, McGennis had come to wonder whether anything he could do among them mattered much.

Slowly and methodically, as he had bathed, he dressed — right sock, left sock, right shoe, left shoe, right puttee, left puttee, put the strap twice round, haul it through the buckle and tuck the end back neatly — and when he was trim in his khaki and yellow leather he stood for a moment with the irresolution of inertia on him. Then he pulled his knife from his pocket, strode across to the thick corner-post of his room, stooped, and with elaborate care cut a notch in the tough, dense wood.

The post, from the upward limit of his reach to well down toward his knees, was jagged with such notches lying in groups of seven, six side by side, and another cut diagonally across them. They were a calendar of more than ordinary significance, in the mind of its maker. Each of them represented a day of "Grin, gabble, gobble," each checked off twenty-four hours in which he had stuck by

his traditions, greeting every comer with that contortion of the lips which, conventionally at least, expresses pleasure, eating sufficient food to keep his body in repair — McGennis revered his body unthinkingly as an ancient Greek — and in which he had, both in his office and in the primitive society of Sicaba, “waggled his jaw,” and thereby overcome a growing disposition to speechlessness.

With the fierce enthusiasm of an ascetic, he cut these records, ineffaceably deep, on the mornings of the days for which they stood. Thus there could be no going back. Staring at him from the undecaying wood, they warned him that for one more stretch, at least, he must grin, gobble, and gabble, or be a quitter.

They served a more immediately practical purpose also. McGennis had found that it was the first grimace, the first nibble at the food his Occidental stomach loathed, the first burst of inane chatter, which came hard. Once fairly started, the grin became a veritable smile — how boyish and appealing he had never guessed — the chatter became animated question and answer, and his stomach, more fundamentally human than Occidental, found even

the food Sicaba afforded preferable to emptiness. But somehow the quiet of the evenings and the stillness of the long nights and the flatness of the dawns brought back continually the question: "What's the use?" and he would have his fight to make all over, with his notch.

On this particular morning, he stood for a while staring at the jagged post which was once a cenotaph to his departed days and an altar prepared for the sacrifice of days to come. Without counting, McGennis knew that his latest notch rounded out a tale of three hundred and sixty-five. The possibilities of that one post were not exhausted yet, and his house held a dozen other posts, virgin still, and smooth. And even if he should endure to notch all the posts in all the houses of Sicaba and all the fringing palms along the beach, and all the trees in the primeval forest round about, it would result in — what?

McGennis had met a man once, down in Bacolot, who made a practice of getting as drunk as possible once each month, once and no more. It gave one something definite to look forward and back to, and hope for and regret, he had explained without embarrass-

ment, and that was an achievement for a white man in the tropics. McGennis, staring glumly at the record of his featureless year, felt that perhaps that man was as reasonable as any other.

Then, impulsively, he stooped again and the knife-blade flashed with mimic fierceness as he hacked at his post. When he rose there were fourteen new notches in it. He had mortgaged a fortnight of his new year. There was no sense in it, very likely, but it was done, and irrevocable, and therefore comforting in a way. He stood back, and the first smile of the day curled his lips. The fool part of him amused the rest, and he turned to the *sala* and breakfast with some cheerfulness.

He was making his last few conscientious pecks at that meal, when the Municipal Secretary, exalted and short-winded personage, climbed his stairs puffingly and stood blinking in the door. McGennis set his cup down and uttered the sound which trustful Sicaba interpreted as the outburst of uncontrollable joy.

"Well, Secretario!" he cried, in his atrocious and unfaltering Spanish. "You're just in time for chocolate. Milicio!" he shouted to his cook.

The Secretary raised a pudgy hand in deprecation, the dignity of an official mission being on him. "It iss dhe lattair, Mr. Magheenis," he announced, holding out a crumpled official envelope. "Dhe Supervisor Provincial sends it wiv a man to running."

Smiling the contented smile of a fat man whose exertion is over, the Secretary sank into a chair and fanned himself with his hat. "*Seria muy importante*," he explained more familiarly. "The courier cost two *pesos*. I brought it over at once."

"A letter by courier and two *pesos*!" McGennis cried, knowing that surprise was expected. "We're getting up in the world. Excuse me if I read it, Secretario?"

"With pleasure," the Secretary murmured, but McGennis did not hear him. He heard nothing, saw nothing, but those surprising words in the crabbed writing of his chief, which changed life in a flash and settled that tormenting question once for all.

Twice he read the letter through greedily, before he dropped it to stare out through the open window. A kaleidoscopic change had overtaken Botany and Geology. The corner of the weedy *plaza* on which his house fronted

now lay fresh and clean under the early sunshine and the salty breeze. Beyond it rose a grove of cocoa-palms, with brown-thatched houses nestled in their shade, and between the tall columns of the tree-trunks shot the crisp sparkle of the blue Visayan Sea. All at once, even Sicaba was exuberant with life, youthful in beauty, friendly. Half noting the change, McGennis raced along beside his thronging thoughts.

What the chief said was true. He *had* thought he was forgotten and stranded in Sicaba. Hastily his mind swept back over the dragging year he was just finishing. Again he saw himself an enthusiastic pilgrim with a work to do. Again he went through the disenchantment; felt the vastness and wildness of the Islands, triumphant Geology and Botany, burst upon him, reminding him for the first time that even an Engineer is only a man at bottom. And once again he felt his disappointment in the people, the simple, childlike, obstinately pliant folk who listened so interestedly, and opposed the inertia of dead centuries to every improvement. How was one to teach them anything? And why should a deputy provincial supervisor, placed in charge

of the roads and bridges and harbors of the whole North Coast, with headquarters at Sicaba, try to create roads and harbors and bridges to supervise? That had become the question finally.

But he had kept on trying, and now a year was up and he had accomplished something, even in hopeless Sicaba. The town was a little cleaner for his having lived there. A few people had come to trust "America." And there *were* roads and bridges and harbors, on the blue-prints in his office. Perhaps it had paid after all. At any rate the people liked him, and he liked them. The fat old Secretario, now —

Just then that patient man interrupted him with the most suppressed of coughs. "Well, Secretario," said McGennis, rousing, "let's drink our chocolate. I must have been dreaming. I hope I haven't kept you waiting long?"

"Only a moment," the visitor assured him, though the Deputy Supervisor's day-dream had lasted long for any dream, "only a moment. I hope," he added, curiosity struggling with courtesy, "that I did not bring bad news."

"Bad news!" McGennis beamed on him.

"You brought the best little old news *you'll* ever tote. Secretario, if you never promulgate worse news than that, you'll boost your circulation a thousand a day. It was red news with green edges."

The Secretary could understand the tone, if the words were beyond him, and his smile matched McGennis's own. "I could almost believe," he hinted with elephantine archness, "that the Government has increased your salary."

"Secretario," said McGennis approvingly, "you hit the truth in the eye that time. But that isn't the best of it."

"Ah," said the Secretary promptly, "then you are also to be married."

"Not on your life!" McGennis shouted scornfully. "Not on your life, Secretario. They've raised me."

"Raised you," the Secretary murmured uncomprehendingly. Most of McGennis's conversation was half incomprehensible to him, and all the more entertaining just for that. It brought him into touch with words he had never heard of.

"Sure," McGennis repeated. "Raised me. Shoved me up a peg. Promoted me."

"Ah, promoted!" said the Secretary, catching at the flying tails of a word he knew.

"In the eye again," McGennis applauded. "Secretario," he began impressively, smoothing out the crumpled letter, "the Old Man," — so he spoke of his chief, the engineer in charge of the battle with Botany and Geology in the two great provinces of *Pagros Oriental y Occidental* — "the Old Man has had his eye on me, so he says. And I reckon he means it. Yes, sir, the old telescope has had a sight on yours respectfully clear up here in Sicaba."

"Yes?" murmured the Secretary, heroically sipping his detestable, lukewarm chocolate.

"And he says," McGennis quoted freely, "that I haven't made good so worse, and that having watered and weeded the banana tree I shall now open my mouth and let something drop therein. And what, Secretario," McGennis demanded excitedly, "*what* do you suppose is going to drop?"

"Yes," the Secretary agreed placidly, "I comprehend. It is a very good idea."

"You bet it is," McGennis shouted. "But you don't comprehend enough to notice. Look

here, Secretario. You know they're building a road up in the Igorrote country, and the Igarooters won't work, and they're going to put me in charge of the worst section of it and see if I can *make* 'em work. Will I *make* them?" he demanded, rhetorically. "*Will* I? I'm sorry for them already yet."

"Yes," murmured the Secretary. "It is a very good idea. I comprehend with clearness, and up to a certain point I agree —"

"I don't believe it," said McGennis flatly. "Listen, Secretario. I'm going away, *sabe?* No more Sicaba in mine! No more bridges and harbors in a cat's eye, but some real live Igaroots and a bunch of picks and shovels and a road you can *see!* And *dynamite!* Lord, Secretario, you don't know how good it'll seem to hear a real noise again, and —"

McGennis stopped suddenly, for something in his words had at last penetrated to the Secretary's understanding. Slowly the worthy officer put down his cup. Slowly he got to his feet, and over his broad, dull face a little procession of emotions made its slow way. Jovial interest gave place to surprise, surprise to dismay, and at last a heavy hopelessness settled on it. "You go away from Sicaba, Maghee-

nis?" he asked. And then he plumped down into his chair again and sat there, an embodiment of chuckle-headed woe.

"Lord," said McGennis to himself, looking at his victim contritely, "I ought not to have tossed it out at him that way."

It was a relief that just at that moment a white-clad native teacher should come to the door of the schoolhouse on the far side of the *plaza* and ring a bell with nervous, insistent strokes. McGennis jerked out his watch, and realized that for the first time in Sicaba he was late in beginning his day. "Stay as long as you want to, Secretario," he called back, rushing for the stairs. The Secretary sat motionless, and McGennis, plunging out into the sunshine, felt a second pang of contrition for having tossed it out so suddenly.

But his regret was only momentary. Somehow the morning sparkled as never morning had outside God's own country, and the Deputy Supervisor, pushing across the *plaza* with long, boyish strides, responded to it. "Going away, going away," was the refrain his feet patted out. Away from Sicaba, away from isolation and obscurity, out to the big, big chance which waited him. And the chief had

been watching him, canny old Stewart who said so little and saw so much with those narrowed gray eyes of his; hard-mouthed Stewart, who handled his forces for the overthrow of Botany and Geology, down there in Bacolot, as a general handles his troops. And Stewart, whose approval was a grunt, had said in so many words that he, McGennis, had made good. Truly, it paid to cut your notches and let the Stewarts look out for the meaning of them.

His eager, keen face was so bright, as he cut across the angle where church and convent wall a corner of the *plaza*, that the men who had been puttering there with stones and cement dropped their work to sing out cheery "*Maayong agas*," a dozen of them in a volley.

"*Maayong aga, amigos*," returned McGennis, and hesitated. He was already late for school, but then school is not one of the duties of an engineer in charge of half a province. One of the few duties that isn't his, McGennis had thought sometimes. Still, this school of Sicaba, in a way —

Somehow McGennis's mind was working in quick flashes, and even as he hung there on his

heel he saw again just how that school had become one of his duties, and laughed grimly to think of it.

There had been a Maestro in Sicaba once, a bespectacled American from an East effete beyond words, but chronic indigestion — coupled with a coldness in the feet equally chronic, thought McGennis, with light scorn — had caused his early departure. And then the school, in the hands of four warring native teachers, male and female, had been going to the dogs, until McGennis, with his inherent dislike for seeing anything go to the dogs uncombated, had, with a deft jerk of the wrist, straightened those four warring pedagogues into their collars and kept them there, till a Deputy Superintendent of Schools had come riding up from Bacolot to see what was to be done about it. McGennis still remembered that trim, slim, innocent-eyed Deputy with regretful admiration.

"I reckon," McGennis had remarked, with the impersonal contempt of an Engineer speaking to a Teacher, "you'll be sending up another glass-eyed Dictionary to snarl 'em all up —"

"I don't know," the Deputy Superintendent

had said thoughtfully. "You've done surprisingly well with them yourself."

"That," McGennis retorted, with huge sarcasm, "is because I've got nothing else to do."

"In that case," the Deputy had said, looking at him with smiling innocence, "I'll let you keep the school, just to fill up the time." And then, unexpectedly, he had swung to his saddle and flicked a spurred heel, and gone galloping away, his big Colt's swinging at his trim waist, and left McGennis wrathful yet admiring.

"I say, Mr. McGennis," had been his parting shot, "try to keep their accent and vocabulary back as close to the Mississippi as you can, won't you?"

Rather than quit, McGennis had taken the school and kept the restive teachers in line by counsel and admonition, and had even, when he was in town, taught for an hour each morning himself, smiling with lofty contempt for his womanish occupation as he revealed to his pupils an accent and vocabulary which had never been east of the Missouri. In a way it was his school, but the work those men were doing at the angle of the *plaza* was infinitely

more his work, and, late or not, he swung on his heel for a look at it.

Of all his schemes for the redemption of Sicaba, that culvert and its tributary ditches was his pet. It had been a nice problem in drainage in a town whose highest ridge rose only a meter above high water, and which yet seemed to have an inexhaustible capacity for getting wet and staying wetter. The water had lain two feet deep all over the *plaza*, the last rains, and a score of men, fathers of families, had wrapped their faces in their clammy cotton blankets and died stolidly of fever, to say nothing of the women and the babies. The babies had been the worst of it. It made him growl out ugly curses to see the tiny coffins borne out of the church, two and three and four a day, with their tawdry draperies of pink calico draggled and beaten by wind and rain. He had made up his mind that it must stop. And it was stopped now, if Yankee ingenuity counted for anything, McGennis thought, as he looked down at the clean green mortar of his culvert.

"Is it good?" the foreman of the masons asked anxiously.

The Deputy Supervisor surveyed the work

with puckered brows. "Fine, Miguel," he said genially. "Couldn't be better," and the workmen smiled at each other like pleased children.

"Two, three, four days, it will be done," Miguel said proudly.

"Great!" cried his ruler. "You're a hustler. You and I've got a little Irish in us, I reckon, hey?" And then, chuckling over the bewilderment his speech had caused, he resumed his light-hearted way to school.

The big, sunny boys' room, where blackboards were fastened incongruously and perilously to nipa walls and bright-eyed, white-frosted Oriental youngsters sat at American desks when they must, and drew their legs up to squat comfortably at other times, was very cheerful ordinarily, far and away the homiest place in Sicaba. But as McGennis entered, he met a chilly air. For eleven months he had been impressing the beauty of punctuality on his charges, and now he had his reward. The children stared with round-eyed disapproval. The teachers greeted him with frosty courtesy.

With twinkling eyes, McGennis marched to the desk. "I am late," he reported meekly,

"and — I will let Alejandro Angel name my punishment."

That was an inspiration. The angelic Alexander turned stiff with responsibility. "I sink," he announced at last, "we s'all all estay after eschool an' Meestair Magheenis s'all tell dhe estory of dhe Princessa who wass esleepy." A stir of approval greeted his pronouncement. The Sleeping Beauty was dear to the hearts of younger Sicaba.

Having made his peace, McGennis passed on to his own little room. And there, while detachments advanced to storm under his leadership the rough terrain of English speech, he fell to thinking again of his wonderful fortune. He would make those Igorrotes work, and he would learn all their legends and crafts and games, and they would be his people. Just as the people of Sicaba were.

McGennis, glancing down at the long bench where a platoon of his people sat with the impishly angelic Alexander at one end — the lower one — and the wan-faced village hunchback at the other, felt a sudden pang. For the first time he realized that some professional pedagogue, some glass-eyed Dictionary, some heavy-handed, solemn fellow, might have those

boys he had made his. If any one must come, he hoped it might be — McGennis ransacked his fancy for the sort of man he wanted. And he could not find one! At that he laughed outright. "You're getting green-eyed," he said to himself, in humorous surprise.

"Teacher, what is green-eye?" demanded the hunchback, and McGennis knew that he had spoken his thought.

"Green-eyed means a gazabo that thinks he's It," he explained promptly; and "What is gazabo, Teacher?" demanded the tireless pursuer after knowledge.

"Time's up," said McGennis laughing. "Rush along the next gang, Alejandro, and if I catch you chewing *bunga* in school again I'll wring your neck, *sabe?*"

When the one hour of his unmanly work was done and the last detachment had departed, McGennis lingered for a moment in the little room, looking out on the *plaza*, and his eyes were very thoughtful, almost wistful. "I reckon," he muttered, "a fellow'd hate to leave the Hot Place if he'd been there long enough to get acquainted," and he seized his hat and hurried over to his office in the big, half-ruinous convent which served Sicaba for

municipal headquarters. His step was not so wholly buoyant as it had been in the morning, and the world was not quite so youthfully exuberant. Not that it was dead, as he had seen it so often from his window at sunrise. It was simply — homelike.

And in his office, too, buoyancy was lacking. Instead of taking up the work he had laid aside the night before, and it was work which must be finished quickly if he meant to leave his house in order, he sat stupidly for a while, and then, half unconsciously, he reached up to a shelf and took down some blue-prints of work which could not be done for years. Not till all those roads and bridges had some habitation more local than a cat's eye. There was the swamp, Manapla way, a hundred good square miles of rich black mud where cacao would grow like a weed, and only a thousand cubic meters of drainage canal were needed, twelve hundred at the outside —

There was the growing bar at the mouth of Cadiz Viejo river. One jetty, placed knowingly, would scoop that out, and there was an ideal place for a dock — McGennis's short brown hand smoothed the curling blue-prints lovingly, as he fell to thinking again of an

unescapable successor. Whom could Stewart send? There was Haskins. Haskins had the education. McGennis admitted reverently, and could draw like a ruling-machine and figure like a comptometer. But Haskins couldn't make a monkey catch fleas, and the North Coast needed a driver, a hard-handed — and yet not too hard. Brown could make 'em hustle all right, but he would have a new fight on every day. What the North Coast needed was a jollier — like Henry? No, Henry was a good fellow all right, but he made things cost like contract work in Frisco, and the North Coast was pitifully poor. What it needed was a contriver like — like — well, like —

“Oh, hell!” said McGennis profanely. Suddenly he stood very straight above his draughting-table, for his door had opened.

The Municipal Secretary and the Municipal Presidente came in. They seemed to radiate an air of funerals, and McGennis's boisterous greeting died in his throat. The Secretary halted just inside the door and stood looking down, a lumpish statue of grief. The Presidente, a spare, eager-faced young native, came forward to McGennis's table.

"Damn!" said McGennis softly, looking at him.

"Señor Magheenis," said the Presidente, "the Señor Secretario says that you will go away. Assure me that he is mistaken."

McGennis started a light answer, and cut it short. "It's true, Presidente," he said briefly.

"But," said the Presidente, "where go all our plans which we made together? Remember how we talked? You shall teach me how the good Presidentes — the Mayors — in America do, and so shall even Sicaba be made American also."

"I'm sorry, Presidente," said McGennis, "but you see —"

"I comprehend," said the Presidente. "We are too little, too poor, too worthless, to take the strength, the teaching, of a man like you —"

"Oh, cut it out!" McGennis begged.

"It is not to be expected, and I do not expect it, now that I comprehend." There was a simple and impressive dignity in the little Presidente. "But what comes to Sicaba, and to me? Excuse me, *Magheenis amigo*. I can not talk more now. Before you go I

shall see you and thank you, but excuse me now."

"Damn!" said McGennis savagely, looking after the two silent figures as they went out. "What right have they got," he demanded sharply of Some One, "to expect me to drool away my whole life up here in this God-for-saken hole? Here, you," he shouted roughly to the man-of-all-work about his office, "get my horse saddled up, quick. I've got to ride out and take a look at that cut on the Segovia road."

And so he rode away and escaped a day of unwonted excitement in Sicaba as the news spread. People told it to each other as they stood in twos and threes before the little *tiendas*, and the greater men of the town, gathered in the earthen-floored café, drank cognac in unusual and dangerous quantities, three and four thimblefuls, some of them; and the school children talked of it, tearfully, and the monkeyish little constabulary soldiers in their lime-washed barrack — McGennis had given *them* a touch of that pliant mule-driver's wrist of his, once or twice, when their inspector had been absent riding along the eighty miles of ladrone-harried coast which was his charge.

In all Sicaba only the Municipal Secretary, sitting in his office with an unlighted cigar between his pudgy fingers, and the young Presidente pacing up and down somewhere in his big house beside Sicaba River, did not speak of McGennis's going.

It was toward the end of the afternoon when the Deputy Supervisor rode back, himself again. Out there in the open, with the sun and wind about him, his brain had cleared. These people had no mortgage on his future. It was a wrench breaking old ties, but not to do it in this case would be a piece of — back-beyond-the-foot-hills — sentimentality.

So when he turned into the first street of the little city and a man stepped out from a *tienda* and asked: "You go away, Señor Magheenis?" McGennis, jogging along with a smile on his face, was ready for him. "Sure," he said carelessly.

But he was not ready for what followed. For the man put a hand to his mouth and called shrilly: "It is true," and from every *tienda* down the length of that long street, men and women came out and stood looking up at him, silently, sorrowfully, questioningly, as if there were something they wanted to under-

stand, and couldn't. Before McGennis was half-way to the *plaza*, his smile was a savage grin, and he had kicked the big horse into a thundering gallop. And so he rode down between the rows of silent people, looking straight ahead.

He had reached the *plaza*, and was swinging his horse for the corner where his house was, when the sight of the schoolhouse on the farther side checked him. This hour, just before sunset, had come to be the one playtime hour of his busy days, and he spent it at the school. Not as a teacher, nor among the boys who were his unofficial pupils. At the other end of the school from the boys' room was another equally big room crowded full of girls, and it was there, oddly enough, that McGennis spent the one happy hour when he did not have to be a Deputy Supervisor.

Oddly, for, as McGennis put it, he "had no use for skirts." In his short, tempestuous life he had seen many good men wasted for love of women, and far from being curious at their fate and the causes of it, he had drawn back into himself till he regarded the softer half of humankind with a suspicion which bordered on hatred.

But there were women of another sort. Tiny things whose little clinging fingers could hardly circle one of his stubby ones. Wee things of such primal innocence that, as they stood unclad at the village wells, with their plump little brown bodies shining in the sun, and their wisps of black hair hanging all draggled about their faces, while their mothers poured water over them, they looked up unabashed if he came riding by, and smiled up friendlily, and lisped "Good-a-mornin'."

Of such women McGennis had no fear, and so it had come about, very gradually, that after all the others were gone, these little ones waited in the big room till McGennis came with a wonderfully colored book, and then, with shining eyes and tiny gurgles of excited laughter, they closed about him and wormed their warm little selves inside his arms and balanced precariously on his shoulders, steadying themselves by his hair, and lay piled, a heap of eager heads and forgotten arms and legs, on the big table where the book was, while the Deputy Supervisor revealed to them the thrilling difference between a peach and an apple, and the astonishing unlikeness of either to a violet. And any one who had come

unseen on McGennis then, would hardly have known him for a Deputy Supervisor.

McGennis, at the *plaza* corner, felt suddenly that these friends of his were waiting for him then, and he could not bear to disappoint them. So he swung the big horse and galloped across and rolled from his saddle at the schoolhouse door and pushed it open and took one step inside, and stopped.

For from the benches and the crowded table there rose a wail of infantile despair, so shrill and queerly, pipingly minor, so very manifestly the outpouring of very tiny broken hearts, that it was like a toy wail, almost ludicrous in its imitation of the real thing.

But McGennis did not smile at it. For an instant he stood, and then he turned and closed the door with fumbling fingers, and took the few steps to his horse stumblingly, and climbed heavily into his saddle, and with loose reins rode off to his house and went up to his *sala* and sat down there, looking blindly out on Sicaba.

The sunset came, brightened, and faded, and passed away, and night shut down over Sicaba, and still he sat there. His *muchacho* came to light a lamp, and McGennis sent him



"With loose reins rode off to his house."

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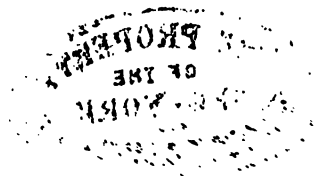
away. Later his cook came, speaking authoritatively of dinner, and McGennis sent his cook away, too, and sat on in the dark.

At last it was the hour when even Sicaba, for a little while, must seem beautiful to the most hostile critic. It is the hour when the full power of night descends upon the world, when the wind dies away to the merest murmur, and the drone of the surf becomes deep and solemn, and the great yellow stars burn very steadily against the soft velvet of the sky.

When that hour came, McGennis stirred, and stood up suddenly, and laid his hands on the broad sill of his window and looked down at Sicaba and up to the stars. "Of course I'm going to stay," he muttered impatiently, as if Some One had asked him a question. "But it's up to You. You butted into this game, and now You've got to play the cards. Pedro," he called, in quite another voice, "bring a light."

When the light was brought, he sat down at his table and drew pen and paper to him and began to write.

"Donald G. Stewart, C. E.," he wrote, tracing the magic initials with reverent care. McGennis would never write C. E. after his



own name, unless some day he did the big, big thing which would lead a college to give him the right, *honoris causa*. He had not the education, he knew that.

“DONALD G. STEWART, C. E.

“*Supervisor in Charge*

“*Provinces Pagros Oriental y Occidental.*

“SIR:— I have the honor to request that I do not be transferred to Luzon, because there are some jobs here which are not done yet.”

His eyes lighted with whimsical amusement as he thought of those “jobs”; teaching a presidente how to be straight, teaching brown, monkeyish soldiers not to run away, teaching the children —

“The fact is, Mr. Stewart,” he wrote with less formality, “that I cannot leave the school which the Dep. Super. Schools kindly gave me to occupy my time. I am the best teacher he has got now, I think. You can ask him.”

Then formality returned:

“I have the honor to thank you for the

kind words you say about me making good.
Of course I know they are not so.

“Very respectfully,
“JOHN MCGENNIS.”

“There,” said McGennis, looking down thankfully at his completed letter, for he hated letter-writing, did McGennis, “I reckon that cinches it. When the Old Man reads that, he’ll *sabe* I’m loco enough to let alone. Anyway,” he added, “Haskins’ll never get the chance to blow about draining Manapla swamp. Haskins has got the education all right, but he couldn’t make a bald monkey catch his own fleas.”

As he entered his bedroom, holding his chimneyless lamp high that the reek of it might not draw into his nostrils, his eye lighted on the jagged post in the corner. “Well,” said McGennis, looking at it, “she’s all notched up for a couple of weeks, anyhow. I’m that much ahead.” The boyish smile curled his firm young lips once more, as the fool part of him began to amuse the other parts. And then, contentedly, he turned to his canvas cot, with the heavy, blue-gray blankets spread upon it.

It is hard and narrow and monkish, that

couch which the world provides for so many of her fighting men and pioneers, but to McGennis it seemed a Place of Rest.

So may they find it, all my far-wandering friends, when to-night they stretch themselves on the rasping canvas and draw the honest, blue-gray blankets over them.

EPILOGUE

That is the East which called me with all its old familiar voices, with all the glamour and color of its pulsating life. And now, having relived that life for an hour, I have come back again to the old house which stands so quiet among the frost-bitten New England woods and fields where sober-living men are providing cannily against the coming winter, in full faith that their precautions will avail, that a Great God rules who permits no Little Gods to turn His world topsyturvy. I am not sorry to be back. The East for the tasting of life, the West for living it.

I feel, regretfully, as you must have felt accusingly or uninterestedly, that these stories are far from pleasant. That is because they are true. Each of them was taken raw from Life. The people of the mimic dramas you have watched are no puppets of my imagination; there is no bit of tragedy or of comedy

written here, however dingy, that some man or woman has not lived. Whether you accept that old heathen man's hypothesis of Little Gods or not, you have looked on at Games which were played by Some One, or by blind Fate. The East you have seen is the real East, stripped of its glamour and its color, a land where nothing is sacred, where there are indeed no Ten Commandments—no Commander, it seems sometimes—a land of uncertainty and empty Fatalism.

Better, it seems to me, a little less of zest and color, and a little more of ballasting Hope.

THE END.







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